

SHEIKH MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH

The Kashmir of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah

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RULERS, OFFICIALS AND MINISTERS OF KASHMIR STATE

Maharaja Hari Singh was the son of Raja Amar Singh, a brother of Maharaja Partap Singh. After the death of the latter on December 23rd, 1925, after a reign of forty years, Hari Singh succeeded him as head of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sir Albion Bannerjee, a Bengali Christian Civil Servant of the Government of India was Senior Member of the Executive Council of the State, 1927—15th March, 1929.

Mr. G. E. C. Wakefield was Senior Member of the Council, 1929—31.

On 25th July, 1931, Hari Singh appointed the first Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Raja Hari Kishan Kaul. On 22nd March, 1932, he was replaced by Lt. Col. E. J. D. Colvin of Indian Political Department.

In 1936 Sir H. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar was appointed as Prime Minister. He was replaced by Sir Maharaj Singh, from April—July, 1943.

Sir Kailash Narain Haksar replaced Sir Maharaj Singh up to January, 1944.

Next came Sir Benegal Narsingh Rao, from January, 1944-45.

Pandit Ram Chandra Kak was appointed from 26th June, 1945—1947.

Maj. Gen. Janak Singh, stayed as Prime Minister from 12th August, 1947—October, 1947, when he was replaced by Mehr Chand Mahajan, October, 1947-48.

In November, 1947 Sheikh Abdullah was appointed as Head of the Emergency Administration and Education Minister, under

Mr. Mehr Chand Mahajan, who continued as Prime Minister of the interim Government of Jammu and Kashmir. On March 6th, 1948 on the advice of the Indian Union, Sheikh Abdullah was appointed Prime Minister of the "New Kashmir", up to 9th August, 1953, when he was arrested without trial.

From August, 1953—1964 Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad was Prime Minister. After him came Shamsuddin, 1964 for a few months, then Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, 1964—Dec. 1971, then Syed Mir Muhammad Qasim, 1972—1975.

With the signing of the Kashmir Accord in 1975 between the Indian Union and Jammu and Kashmir, the head of the State was now designated as Chief Minister and Sheikh Abdullah returned to power after a gap of almost twenty-two years as its first Chief Minister.

N. B. After the Cease-Fire Line of 1949 had been announced the portion of the former Jammu and Kashmir State now on the Pakistan side of the border has usually been generally known as "Azad Kashmir" instead of "Azad Jammu and Kashmir". The Author may be excused for using this nomenclature in this book.

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PREFACE

Life is full of unpredictables and a casual conversation can provide the basis for an interesting project, and so it was for me.

It was after having paid three recent visits to the Valley as a tourist, having met Sheikh Abdullah after a gap of thirty-seven years and also his family, having attended his "*chehlum*" in Srinagar on October 17th after his demise on September 8th, 1982 that my son-in-law's brother, himself from a *Kashmiri* family, said to me:

"You know, with the special relationship which your husband and his family have had with Sheikh Abdullah since 1925 you could write an interesting and useful book about him as a humanist. It ought to go down very well here because you will be depicting him from an angle which no one else has done so far."

Hence this record of personal remembrances and interviews with various people, both political and old and dear friends, with their opinions and judgements on this extraordinary man whose mission in life it became to change the destiny of the people of his nation. That the book took shape was really just because of a chance remark of a one-time dissident student friend from Lahore of the days of the British *raj*, who I was now visiting in Bombay in the winter of 1979-80. This gave me the impetus of visiting the Valley and meeting Sheikh Abdullah, then Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. This friend was Rajbans Khanna, who in those earlier years under the British *raj* was always in and out of jail, who called me "*Appa*", whom I used to nurse back to health before his next bout in jail and who was like a member of our family.

My husband had often met Sheikh Abdullah from 1925 to October, 1947 either in Kashmir or Lahore. They finally met again in January, 1948 on opposite sides at the United Nations Security Council Session at Lake Success, New York, Sheikh Abdullah as a member of the Indian delegation and my husband an Adviser to the

Pakistan delegation headed by Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, then Pakistan's Foreign Minister. This was the last time they met as my husband died on November 30th, 1950.

This is a research book on the political struggle of the Kashmir of Sheikh Abdullah and of his role. It is documented with extracts from authentic books and records and is the story of the *Kashmiris'* struggle for freedom and identity in the light of the part played by Sheikh Abdullah and from the point of view of those who knew him personally.

The book contains comments of people on both sides of the Cease-Fire Line and I am perhaps the first person who has had the opportunity to meet and interview leaders and others on both sides—in held Kashmir, Pakistan and India—writers, politicians, freedom fighters and friends from all walks of life from 1925 onwards. It relates part of the Kashmir struggle for freedom from the *Dogra raj* and it is up to the reader to assess whether and where we in Pakistan made mistakes over the Kashmir question.

I was fortunate in having special attachments with the people of Kashmir because of my husband's having served there as Principal of two colleges, and his popularity. He was a close friend of all the Kashmir leaders, including Sheikh Abdullah. He was one of those who helped in the drafting of the 'New Kashmir' manifesto. He tried his best, as did others, for the reconciliation of Sheikh Abdullah and the Quaid-i-Azam.

Everywhere I went people were happy to be interviewed because of my husband's association with Kashmir and Sheikh Abdullah. There are many books written by *Kashmiris*, Indians, *Pakistanis* and foreigners on this subject, but probably no impartial book is in the market which gives enough guidance on the Kashmir story. I have tried to fill that gap in the form of interviews with those who knew Sheikh Abdullah as a student, a leader, a politician or a friend.

I must record the extent to which I benefited from assistance during the two years which it has taken me to prepare this book and how grateful I am to those who have helped. People were unfailingly kind when I asked them for interviews, whether in Srinagar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Rawalpindi, Islamabad or Lahore.

I am especially grateful to Begum Abdullah and her family, who gave me friendship and hospitality and several old associates of my husband's in Kashmir, with all of whose help I was able to contact those whom I wished to interview.

In Pakistan I received a great deal of assistance from Mr. Kalim Akhtar, originally a Jammu man, and who himself researches in Kashmir history and politics. He proved a mine of information and encouragement to me, for which I shall always be grateful.

I am also extremely grateful to Messrs Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., Lahore, for publishing this book and to all their staff especially Mr. Muhammad Ashiq Malik, M.P.D. (Leeds), U.K. for their great help and suggestions in dealing so patiently with the technical problems involved in printing a book full of references and quotations such as this.

Those who have lived in Jammu and Kashmir of the old days and those who spent many idyllic summers in the Valley as visitors will nostalgically recall those times. I hope all who read this book will enjoy it as much as I did in writing it.

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Dated 15th June, 1986.

C. BILQEES TASEER

FIRST REMEMBRANCES

I first met Sheikh Abdullah in August, 1937 in Gulmarg, Kashmir, although I had heard about him at various times since my arrival in Amritsar, Punjab from London in October, 1936 for my marriage, which took place in Lahore in Barud Khana. The "*nikah*" was performed in person by Allama Iqbal, a friend of many years' standing of my husband's family and whose protege my husband was in his poetic and literary achievements. The "*nikahnama*" was also drafted by Allama Iqbal so as to produce an ideal document.

This occasion of the "*nikah*", 11th October, 1936 was the last time Allama Iqbal visited Barud Khana. Already his health had begun to fail and in order to perform the "*nikah*" he was placed comfortably on a cot while I sat on a stool at his side to recite the "*kalma*" before the marriage ceremony was performed. A few weeks later my husband took me to meet Iqbal in his house on what was then Mayo Road, where I remember he was reclining on his bed and smoking a *hookah*, while a mouse scurried across the floor. The last time I saw him was in the early winter of 1937 when we took our baby daughter, Salma, to show her to him and receive his blessings. He died the following year in 1938.

In 1937 our family, that is Taseer, myself, baby Salma, my mother-in-law, her servant, Boli and our *Kashmiri* cook, Nura from Uri, had gone up to Gulmarg in the beginning of August, by which time the weather in Baramulla, where Salma was born, had become humid. The day time was full of sunshine and we used to sit outside as much as possible. We also went for picnics to Niglenallah, Khillennarg (11,000 feet high), Ferozpuernallah, on ponies.

Here I must say a few words about my mother-in-law, known to all as Bebee-Ji. Never was anyone blessed with such a wonderful mother-in-law as I. She was the embodiment of love, which she showered upon everyone. The children adored her for she was known as "*The Story Telling Grandmother*". She had a fantastic collection of stories gathered from "*Arabian Nights*" and I don't know where

else and in the five months which our family spent in Baramulla and Gulmarg in the summer of 1937 she would tell a fresh story each evening.

One morning, sitting out on a rug in the sun—Taseer and I with baby Salma beside us, we saw a tall figure striding towards our hut. It was Sheikh Abdullah, who had found out our hut number from Dr. Noor Hussain, Health Officer of Srinagar, with whom we had become friends in Gulmarg and who was already an ardent supporter of *Sheikh sahib* in his campaign for the uplift of his oppressed *Kashmiris*. *Sheikh sahib*, wrapped in his *pashmina shawl* and my husband likewise, sat together for sometime on the grass discussing their politics, of which I was ignorant, having been in the sub-continent for only about eleven months, knowing of the Lion of Kashmir from my husband and his family as someone who was spoken of with great respect, for they had all known him since 1925 when he was a student in Lahore.

Round about the middle of September we left Gulmarg for Srinagar, to spend a week in a houseboat, an entirely new experience for me. When we reached Srinagar after our long journey we became involved in a most unusual drama, as a result of which we all narrowly escaped death by drowning. It had been an exceptionally warm summer that year in Kashmir, with a very hot June which had melted more of the mountain snows than usual, followed by a heavy monsoon. We had earlier made an appointment with Hafeez Jullundhri, the poet, an intimate friend of both *Sheikh sahib* and my husband, who was staying in Pahalgam with his family, for us all to link up on the river Jhelum in Srinagar for a week in our respective houseboats, and meet Sheikh Abdullah and Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, an old family friend who was a shawl merchant from a well-known family. He was a *Kashmiri* nationalist, called "Father of the Modern Political Movement" in Kashmir. He had been exiled from the State in March, 1924 by the *Maharaja* when the whole of the family property was confiscated but was allowed to return in September, 1927. While outside the State he first spent six months in Peshawar and then lived with my husband's family in Barud Khana, Lahore. During this time he first formed a Committee consisting of Allama Iqbal, Syed Mohsin Shah (also earlier exiled permanently from the State for his participation in the *Kashmiri* Freedom Struggle) and he himself, and then continued to build up a slow but steady movement from outside the State for reforms in Kashmir. Meetings were held at Lahore, Sangla, Simla, Amritsar, Sialkot,

Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Lyallpur and Daska, condemning the repressive policy of the *Dogras* and calling upon the British Government to intervene and safeguard the rights of the Muslim citizens of the State.

Khawaja Saaduddin had taken the responsibility of engaging a houseboat for us, and we were moored on the first night of our arrival in Srinagar in the middle of the river, as was also Hafeez Jullundhri and his family of wife and eight daughters, until both parties could be allotted *ghat* numbers next morning along the Bund river side. However, at 2.30 a.m. we were suddenly awakened to find that our houseboat was sinking and we were all dragged out through a window in our wet night clothes just in time by Hafeez's boatman, before the boat sank completely under water along with all our possessions!

Next morning Khawaja Saaduddin engaged a team of men to dive under the water and pull out our luggage from the various rooms of the houseboat before it disintegrated and floated away in pieces down the river. Those labourers were so wonderful that they managed to salvage our entire luggage except for a few odd things such as combs, brushes.

Hafeez Jullundhri and my husband had a very enjoyable week, meeting *Sheikh sahib*, Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed, Jeweller, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, G. M. Sadiq and others of the Kashmir Nationalist Movement, but except for visiting the handicraft exhibition and *Khawaja sahib's* house at his invitation, my time was fully occupied in salvaging our water drenched luggage. In Lahore itself also right up to 1947 each winter there used to be a handicrafts exhibition in Patiala Grounds to which large numbers of merchants from Kashmir would bring their finest work for sale.

I wrote a short story about this adventure of ours which was published in "*Pakistan Times*", Lahore in September, 1981. I sent a copy to *Sheikh sahib* for his edification and back came his reply, dated September 22nd to me:

"This brought many old memories crowding into my mind about men, matters and events which have left their indelible impressions on our minds."

This was about 1937. Who could have predicted that eleven

years later in Lahore, a year after Pakistan had been established, Hafeez Jullundhri would sit with my husband in our study room with the rough draft of his '*Qaumi Tarana*' and that the two of them together would perfect the words of Pakistan's National Anthem?

* * * * *

We spent two-and-a-half months of the summer of 1938 in Gulmarg along with my future brother-in-law, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, staying with Dr. Noor Hussain, then Health Officer, Srinagar.

While we were in Gulmarg that summer there was a huge outcry and a police hunt to find the culprit, because someone had found an old cow bone under a bush and at that time the slaughter of a cow incurred a jail sentence of probably ten years! The culprit was not caught.

That was the regime of Maharaja Hari Singh. Sir Muhammad Zafullah Khan, Foreign Minister, head of the Pakistan delegation to the Security Council Session of January, 1948 in the United Nations at Lake Success, New York, while reporting on the problems of Kashmir mentioned that under the rule of Maharaja Partap Singh, who was in power from September, 1885–December, 1925, the penalty for killing a cow was death by burning.

Under the Sikh rule, during the governorship of Col. Mian Singh, an old Muslim (*hato*) and seventeen members of his family, including children, were burnt alive in the presence of the Governor, at the instigation of the *Pandits*. This was only one example of a whole family being burnt alive for being suspected of cow killing.

Before 1947 the mulberry tree was also protected under the Kashmir State laws and every villager having even one field had to cultivate one mulberry tree and its cocoons, which were collected by the State for the Government Silk Factory. Justice M. Y. Saraf relates:—

"In 1924 in a village in *tehsil* Pulwama a child broke one or two branches from a mulberry tree. His father was arrested and given such a severe beating that as a result of head injuries he died."¹

Now the mulberry is cultivated in fields on a commercial basis for the Government Silk Factory.

My brother-in-law to be, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, went down to Srinagar in 1938 to participate in the demonstrations which took place after the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah on August 28th. As a result of protests over the heavy sentence given to a political leader of Mirpur for an alleged anti-Government speech public meetings were held, processions taken out, section 144 was imposed in Srinagar. Muslims, *Pandits* and Sikhs joined in these protests. Even a women's procession was taken out in Baramulla. About a thousand people were arrested and the important leaders sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

* * * * *

In 1939 we were again in Gulmarg for the summer with Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Rajbans Khanna, a student leader friend from Lahore and my sister, Alys, who had come from London just a few months earlier.

In those three happy summers in Gulmarg we also used to meet the affluent families from the Punjab, mostly the feudal class, who all rented their own huts for the season and also students of my husband, all of whom regularly went to Kashmir in the summers. One of such families was the Iftikharuddins, for Mian Iftikharuddin, at that time a Congress Party Working Committee member was a dear friend of *Sheikh sahib* and they used to meet each summer when the family came up to Gulmarg, as well as in Lahore in the winters. Then there were the members of Mian Amiruddin's family, my husband's relations.

Mian Salahuddin, elder son of Mian Amiruddin remembers listening to Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, Sheikh Abdullah, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Taseer discussing the future of India. As a Leftist Sheikh Abdullah's ideas about partition were very clear. The Muslims have done their best to live with the Indians. Now we want autonomy in the areas which are Muslim. But Quaid-i-Azam was a Statesman who would not budge one inch from his original stand, said Salahuddin.

Hafeez Jullundhri, another very dear friend of *Sheikh sahib* always spent the summers in Pahalgam along with his wife and daughters, so we sometimes used to go there to visit the family.

On this third visit to Gulmarg when *Sheikh sahib* came to see

us he asked us to be his guests at a *Kashmiri* "wazwan" in a house-boat on the Dal Lake when we went down to Srinagar in September. We also went to a tea party in Dr. Noor Hussain's house where, believe it or not, the solemn Sher-i-Kashmir kept us all in fits of laughter with the jokes he cracked. Our common friend, Sufi Tabassum, from Lahore, a *Kashmiri* and a scholar of Persian was also there, along with two of his sons. This is how my sister described seeing *Sheikh sahib* for the first time:

"We were sitting outside in the sun and suddenly I saw this tall figure swathed in a shawl, striding along towards our hut. As he came along, from all sides the horsemen, cowherds, milkmen and porters came running, running, at the same time calling out across the hill to others: "Our Sher-i-Kashmir has come." They all came running after him and as they caught up with him they bent down and touched the edge of his shawl."

My sister, having recently come from England, thought this a very theatrical gesture, but I reminded her that by this time *Sheikh sahib* had already been five times to jail fighting for the rights and uplift of these very people, so if they revered him it was only natural and this was one of their ways of showing their reverence. Then to this she agreed.

I wrote to *Sheikh sahib* on May 9th, 1981 recalling this incident and how I was longing for July to come when I could again pay a visit to Srinagar and how I remembered the time we lived there in 1941—43 and the beautiful Spring I had seen in 1942 with almond blossom, tulips and daffodils in our own garden and the green hill of Takht-i-Suleiman. *Sheikh sahib* wrote to me in reply on May 23rd, slightly reprovingly:

"I must say your memory is prodigious. You remember even the small incident like the one which took place in 1939."

"You have really waxed eloquent and lyrical while recalling your visit to the happy Valley in full spring bloom. I wish you remember that there are also people with throbbing hearts and pulsating with life. They are alas taken as a part of the landscape. Things and events do change and move fast but memories—good or bad, sweet or bitter, leave indelible impressions on the human mind. I cherish the memories of those fateful years which have become a part of history now."

I felt slightly ashamed of my lapse.

In my letter of May 9th I had also sent him snapshots of my sister Alys and my brother-in-law, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and myself taken in Sharjah, where we had all met in the previous winter. So he added in his letter of May 23rd:

"We were eagerly looking forward to the visit of Faiz to Kashmir and to meeting Alys after a long, long time. But though Faiz did come to India he could not pay a visit to us. Please give my regards to Faiz and Alys."

"Please convey my affectionate regards to Tarfa. I was much impressed by the intensity of her love for her motherland. She is really a very brave girl. May God bless her."

He had such love and faith in young people as the future builders of the world that he always remembered Tarfa in his letters, the Lahore girl student who went with me to the Valley in the summers of 1980 and 1981.

Even from the year 1937, the summer when I first visited the Valley I can remember what pathetic, degraded persons the average poor *Kashmiris* were still thought to be, men and women who had become so accustomed to human degradation and slavery that their minds were too numbed to resent suffering, poverty and inhumanity, for the culture of poverty suppresses all desire for the expression of one's needs because of a sense of fatalism, low self esteem, ignorance and acceptance of one's lot in life as immutable. I had written to my parents in London a very vivid description of how I had seen the Valley people of that time.

Those moneyed people who went from the Punjab to spend the whole summer away from the heat of the plains in the beautiful mountains of Gulmarg or Pahalgam regarded them from a superior distance as people to be taken advantage of, pitied may be but taken advantage of because they were trapped by life and for them there was no solution in sight until the coming of Sheikh Abdullah at the beginning of the thirties, who began to champion their cause. For it was only denial of opportunity that stood in the way of the progress of *Kashmiri* Muslims in the State. Those who left the State and settled outside both before and after 1947 quickly showed their worth in an atmosphere of healthy competition and rose to high positions in the fields of administration, education and literature.

Even noting the cultural achievements of earlier times while describing the historical and cultural background of Kashmir, Nagin Bazaz quotes his father, Prem Nath Bazaz:

"It is interesting to note that the Kashmir women took part in intellectual pursuits and produced works of no mean order. Mention may be made of Habbakhatun, a peasant girl who lived to be the queen of King Yusuf Shah Chak (1576-86) and Arnimal (wife of Bhavani Das Kachru). Both of them were deeply interested in and devoted to music, besides poetry. They sang of frustrated love and the misery of existence; their poetry is full of pathos and they adequately represent the wretched condition of the women of the Valley during these dismal days."²

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² Bazaz, Nagin, "*Ahead of His Times, Prem Nath Bazaz*", p. 7, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1983.

ALL INDIA KASHMIR COMMITTEE, 1931-33

After the uprisings, first in Jammu and shootings of July 13th, 1931 in Srinagar, when hundreds of people lost their lives, many leaders including Sheikh Abdullah were arrested, curfew and martial law was imposed in Srinagar. People defied the curfew and martial law by bringing out hundreds of processions, which then led to more indiscriminate firing and deaths. Telephone and telegraph communications from Srinagar were suspended, roads from Srinagar were closed, but two messengers managed to reach Lahore and met Maulana Abdul Majid Salik, Editor of "*Inquilab*" and Syed Mohsin Shah (already exiled from the State by the *Maharaja* for his part in the Freedom Struggle). Together they went to Allama Iqbal, the spearhead of the *Punjabi-Kashmiri* Muslim Movement in sympathy with the *Kashmiri* Struggle. Here is what he said, as reported by Muhammad Yusuf Saraf:

"One thing which stands out clearly about Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah is that he has completely removed from the Muslims of Kashmir the fear of going to jail or of facing the *Dogra* army. But with your limited resources and comparatively the unlimited resources at the disposal of the *Dogra* Government you cannot continue like this for a long time; therefore, the only way out is to launch a movement in the Punjab and send volunteers from here because the *Maharaja's* resources would not be sufficient to withstand such a movement for a long time; he will have to seek the assistance of the British Government and when this assistance is sought and naturally made available, then would be the appropriate moment for us to demand that if they wanted to intervene in the dispute on the side of the *Maharaja*, then they must equally ensure that important grievances of the State Muslims were also redressed."¹

After the July 1931 riots, it was at the request of Dr. Iqbal, who knew that he and the members of his organisation would have a considerable number of disciplined volunteers and adequate funds

at their disposal that Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed took the initiative in organising the work of the All India Kashmir Committee, starting from 1931. At Garhi Habibullah Rest House a meeting was arranged between Mirza Bashiruddin and Sheikh Abdullah in which it was decided that the latter should be the leader of the movement and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan, Secretary. Funds were collected from all over India for the Kashmir cause.

The Committee was formed as a result of a meeting held at Fair View, Simla on July 25th, 1931, sponsored by Dr. Iqbal, at which Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed presided. The All India Kashmir Committee was formed with eminent persons from all over India. Moulvi Abdur Rahim represented the Kashmir Valley and Allah Rakhar Saghar represented Jammu province.

Then in 1932, first from the Punjab and then from all over India the *Ahrars*, who were supporters of Congress, came into Kashmir in thousands to court arrest, with the slogan "*Kashmir Chalo*". The fact that they were not against the *Maharaja* is borne out by the fact that their leaders were accommodated in Srinagar as State guests. According to Mian Amiruddin, President, Anjuman-i-Hamayat Islam, Lahore and a member of the original All India Kashmir Committee, along with Syed Mohsin Shah and Allama Iqbal and a number of members of the *Ahrar* and *Ahmedia* movements, in 1932 the *Ahrars* started the movement, "*Kashmir Chalo*" under the leadership of Attaullah Shah Bukhari, himself from a *Kashmiri* family of Amritsar. They collected a considerable amount of funds from all over India for their cause. But Mian Amiruddin, who helped in the collection of funds from various sources said that the *Ahrars* refused to hand these over to Sheikh Abdullah, being by that time against the involvement of the *Ahmedis* in the All India Kashmir Committee and declared that they would spend the funds themselves inside Kashmir for the help of the *Kashmiris*, but actually this did not happen and the money was wasted.

Because of the fact that the first Chairman of the All India Kashmir Committee, Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed and some other members, including Sir Zafrullah Khan were *Ahmedis*, Mian Amiruddin said in an interview with me in Lahore in January, 1984 that he asked Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl of Srinagar to bring Sheikh Abdullah, in September, 1932, to a pre-arranged meeting place at a restaurant near the Jhelum river, where Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq of Amritsar was also present, and Sheikh Abdullah was asked to prepare

a statement for the press to the effect that he was not a member of either the *Qadiani* or the Lahore group of the *Ahmedis* and this statement was published in all the Lahore newspapers. Mian Amiruddin added that in Srinagar, where Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah had been the first to make the same accusation against Sheikh Abdullah he was required to give a similar declaration in a public meeting. The fact that at this time he kept a small beard helped to lend credence to the rumour of his being an *Ahmedi*, but he was actually a *Hanifi-Sunni*.

The *Ahrars*, being pro-Congress it was said that the Congress was responsible for the rift between the All India Kashmir Committee and the *Ahrars*.

After the shootings and arrests in 1931 of thousands of *Kashmiris* when it was decided to form the All India Kashmir Committee in 1931, Sir Muhammad Iqbal requested Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed, supreme head of the *Ahmedia* movement, to become its Chairman, knowing that his community were efficient and that he could collect funds and find plenty of volunteers to work for the cause of the Kashmir Muslims.

The duties allocated to the Committee in Kashmir were:

- (1) To give financial support to the agitation.
- (2) To give financial assistance to the dependents of jailed political leaders, martyrs and those wounded in the firings and *lathi* charges.
- (3) To arrange for medical treatment of the injured.
- (4) To arrange legal defence for political workers.
- (5) To provide legal assistance to the preparation of cases before the Middleton and Glancy Commissions.

On an appeal by the All India Kashmir Committee 14th August was held as Kashmir Day and thousands of meetings and processions were held throughout the subcontinent.

Sheikh Muhammad Ahmed Mazhar, Advocate, who had practised in Kapurthala before 1947 and since then in Lyallpur and

who was one of those lawyers deputed by the All India Kashmir Committee to work in Jammu and Kashmir in teams of ten at a time in order to deal with the hundreds of cases of those people imprisoned after the July, 1931 uprising, riots and shootings, on charges of murder, arson and rioting related:

"I received a telegram at Kapurthala in October, 1931 from Mirza Bashiruddin, "Report at once to Lahore for being sent on duty to Srinagar to work with Sheikh Abdullah."

On arrival in Srinagar, I found there were certain difficulties in procedure, which necessitated my going to Lahore for their clarification.

"In April, 1932, I returned to Srinagar for five months. I conducted sixty cases in the lower courts and appellate courts, up to the High Court. My assignment consisted of two hundred cases."

"There was firing in the city and in the villages in 1931 and more than one hundred Muslims were shot. Then the British Government took charge and there were three or four British officers at the helm of affairs. The Glancy Inquiry Commission was also working at that time, which was helped by the Kashmir Committee."

The Glancy Commission had been constituted on November 12th, 1931 to enquire into the alleged grievances of various sections of people of the State, especially Muslims. It was headed by an Englishman, Mr. B. J. Glancy from the foreign and political department of the Government of India. His services were lent to the Kashmir Government at the request of the *Maharaja* with whom he had a friendly relationship as he had already served the State as Finance member of the Cabinet. Four non-official members were appointed to assist him, two Muslims and two Hindus:

From the Valley—Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai and *Pandit* Prem Nath Bazaz

From Jammu Region—Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan and Mr. Lok Nath Sharma.

In October, 1931 Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas is reported to have said:

"The All India Kashmir Committee has projected our case across the seas. The Indian Government must surely come to our rescue."

It was through Dr. Iqbal that the Glancy Commission made its report that there should be religious freedom throughout Kashmir and from the places of worship the Government should take away their control and hand them over to the people. Education should be universal and more primary schools should be opened. Muslim teachers should be appointed, a special office should be created for the administration of educational institutions for the Muslims. All jobs should be advertised and should be given to people in relation to their religious population.

This Glancy Commission Report was a follow-on of the political awakening which began in Kashmir in 1924 with strikes and processions, when the people began to demand reforms. Thus Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, with the help of some like minded people had a memorandum drafted to present to the Viceroy, Lord Reading on his visit to Srinagar in October, 1924. The demands were many but some were implemented in the Glancy Commission Report. The signatories to the memorandum were Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, Khawaja Hassan Shah Naqshbandi, Mir Waiz Kashmir, Maulvi Ahmadullah, Mir Waiz Hamdani, Agha Syed Hussain Shah Jalali, Mufti Sharif-ud-din and Khawaja Hassan Shah Mahandi. As a result of the presentation of this memorandum Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl was banished from the State for two years, his *jagir* was confiscated, as was that of Khawaja Hassan Shah Naqshbandi and other signatories, who either lost their positions or were issued warnings.

Sheikh Muhammad Mazhar continued:

"Our organisation collected funds from all over India for aid to the *Kashmiri* Muslims during this period, in fact from *Ahmedis* from all over the world. Each person contributed one pice per rupee of his earnings and the funds went to Qadian, the then world headquarters, from whence the work of the All India Kashmir Committee was organised. Right up to 1947 the Committee was providing funds to the *Kashmiris* in Jammu and Kashmir. Our Committee also arranged for the publication

of Kashmir news in British newspapers about the demands of *Kashmiri* Muslims and the much-needed introduction of reforms.

"We lawyers all worked as volunteers from 1931-33 and some for longer. For example Chaudhry Muhammad Ahsadullah Khan was a lawyer who worked from 1931-36. Even Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan was associated with some cases. We were batches of about ten volunteers at a time, all working in the courts of Jammu, Srinagar and Poonch, etc. So far most of the cases were being conducted in the lower courts by *Pandit* lawyers. Now every week we had to report to the High Court that we had accepted and conducted cases and I would visit the jail to find out which prisoners had not so far appealed. Many hundreds were in jail. All freedoms were denied to the people, so they used to raise slogans concerning their rights and the police would *lathi* charge them. Then there would be more *lathi* charging and firing. Most people were injured in the firing.

"The Chief Justice was Sir Barjor Dalal, who had retired from the Allahabad Court and was one of the best judges in India. He was made Judicial Minister as well as Chief Justice. He was as just as anyone could be.

"Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, advocate, who later rose to be a Judge of the Lahore High Court and died in Lahore in 1946 was taking cases in Srinagar before I went. He worked for a very long time. Then the Government in Srinagar charged him with taking part in politics, which was not correct and ordered him to leave. The grievance was that all the accused were denied lawyers of their choice. A telegram was sent that Sheikh Bashir Ahmed should protest before the Chief Justice. It was sent to our representative in London (Sir Zafrullah Khan, at that time *Amir* of the *Ahmedia* Movement in London since the 1920's and a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council) that the Kashmir Government is so severe that it is driving lawyers out of the State and a question should be asked in the House of Commons. Sir Zafrullah was able to speak to the British Government Secretary for State for India. After our protest the rule was altered, but the Governor did not modify his order. The Chief Justice passed a new order, 'The cases of Bashir Ahmed should be held outside the jurisdiction of the

Governor so that they can be conducted by him'. While in London for the Round Table Conference Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan met the Secretary of State for India in connection with the situation in Kashmir. The Kashmir case was raised in British Parliament for the grant of basic human rights to *Kashmiris*.

"The Kashmir Committee volunteers worked with zeal, devotion and sense of duty for the *Kashmiris*. By the time I returned home there were no cases left in the Kashmir Valley to be defended; all had been completed. I worked for six to seven months. Some cases were for appeal, some were withdrawn by the authorities.

"Mr. E. J. D. Colvin, the newly appointed Prime Minister in place of Hari Kishan Kaul, asked Sheikh Abdullah to stop agitation. I said to him:

'Come to me tomorrow and I shall prepare a memorandum on your behalf. You will present it to Mr. Colvin. It will read—
'You have asked me to stop the agitation. This memorandum says that people have demanded certain rights and the Government fired upon them and persecuted them, so what can I do in this matter? When they are produced before the courts there is agitation all over the State. Therefore, this matter is in your hands to stop. The courts are not doing justice to the people, some cases are misrepresented, some are false cases concocted out of revenge.'

"I was given instructions on how to conduct my cases. The most important was not to accept any gift or any money from anyone. We all had to work selflessly.

"Another useful function was carried out by the Kashmir Committee through its representative, Syed Zainul Abedin, who held several meetings with Mr. Colvin and Mr. Lauther regarding the exile or restriction of certain *Kashmiri* leaders, e.g. Syed Mirak Shah, Mian Ahmed Yar Khan, advocate, and Mufti Zia-ud-Din. As a result of these meetings the prohibitory orders were rescinded.

"When I finally left Srinagar Sheikh Abdullah organised a farewell gathering of 25,000 people to bid me goodbye. He

told them that in spite of this man's own three sons being seriously ill he did not desert his duties here in order to go home. He stayed here to complete his duties for us *Kashmiris*."

Because of being at the head of the relief and rehabilitation work being done in the years 1931-33 for the *Kashmiris* affected by the July, 1931 uprisings Sheikh Abdullah had a fair amount of correspondence with Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed, particularly regarding details of expenditure of funds entrusted to him. It was after the two meetings, one with Mian Amiruddin, one in a public meeting in Srinagar regarding allegations about his own faith that he wrote on 22-10-32 to Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed (in Urdu):

'I have been asked about my faith. My God knows what I am, who I am. I know my God is fully aware about my faith and my mission for the liberation of the *Kashmiris* from the *Dogra raj*.'

Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and Abdul Majid Qarshi of Jammu many times expressed their thanks to Mirza Bashiruddin for his great help to the *Kashmiri* cause and hoped he would continue his financial support after the immediate crisis was finished, which according to Sheikh Muhammad Ahmed Mazhar he did.

SHEIKH ABDULLAH BEGINS HIS MISSION

Sheikh Abdullah soon found himself at the head of Kashmir's liberation movement, which was launched first as Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932 and was later converted into Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in 1938 and then led to the final phase of the "Quit Kashmir" Movement in 1946, when an upheaval shook the State.

Nagin Bazaz quotes his father, Prem Nath Bazaz, writer and historian, as having written:

"The 1931 rebellion was a grand success. Within a few years most of the demands of the *Kashmiris* had to be conceded by the ruler. The proprietorship of the land lost in Moghul rule by the *Kashmiris* was restored; the mosques confiscated by Sikh rulers were handed back to the Muslims; freedom of expression and association with certain limitations was granted and a legislative assembly established though the majority of its members were nominated by the *Maharaja* and greater opportunities were afforded to the *Kashmiris* to get recruited into State service."¹

Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz has also written:

"It was for the first time in the history of Kashmir that people had struck work for political ends. Uptil now business used to be suspended only on occasions of deaths in the royal family but now it had been done in furtherance of the national cause; the strike was so complete that it had become difficult for anyone to open the shops."²

Sheikh Abdullah coming to the forefront at the time when conditions were ripe for revolt and tutored by those groups working with him quickly acquired from the beginning the skill of captivating his audiences, who were then mostly the simple, uneducated, underprivileged masses, who had been enslaved for decades and conveying

to them his message. Sheikh Abdullah was deeply religious, but a subtle politician. The masses were too downtrodden, too ignorant to be awakened by mere politics. They followed him as a religious leader who, in the early days lived amongst them as one of them. This is how he was so successful in motivating them. Mixing politics with religion as he did was resented by some of his critics but he nevertheless used this method. When he first came on the scene mass meetings, processions, demonstrations were still either forbidden or frowned upon, but by speaking to his people in congregations of thousands, after first having recited in his melodious voice a passage from the Holy *Koran* and then quoting some of the simple relevant progressive lines of Iqbal he was able to arouse them to action.

Like Mahatma Gandhi, Sheikh Abdullah had within him a sense of history. To see the rapport which he had with huge gatherings of people, most of them illiterate and poorly dressed, was an overwhelming experience. This rapport was a two-way phenomenon. He reached the masses but they gave him back what bolstered his confidence and his determination to continue his struggle for their uplift. Their affection for him, their gathering in tens of thousands to see and hear and if possible to touch him, were spontaneous. They felt that something new was happening in their drab lives, that he really cared for them, understood their problems and was determined to do something about them. The zeal in his eyes and dedication in his face were what made him supreme in the eyes of his fellow *Kashmiris*. They came not only to see and hear him but also to bring him offerings of money and the heavy silver jewellery of their women. He was their hope, the person who dared to present their grievances to the head of the State and his officials. They saw in him the deliverer of the misrule of the *Maharaja*. A charismatic leader such as he evoked strong emotions of love or hatred in ordinary people, love for him and hatred for the oppressive system under which they lived.

All this gave him an awesome power and made him unique among the leaders of the freedom movement of his time in Jammu and Kashmir, which was at that time the personality cult, but which later changed and developed over the years into a more sophisticated concept of the struggle, as world politics began to have their impact.

Looking down the years from 1930 when he returned from Aligarh University with an M.Sc. degree—the first *Kashmiri* Muslim to achieve this distinction—one can see the long line of freedom

fighters who worked with him and for him—inspired by the idealism and sincerity of this visionary, by his forcefulness, his great charisma and obstinacy in getting people to believe in and work for what he wanted for them—the hope of a better future, the idea of social equality. And the oppressed, the starving, the deprived to whom he gave dignity and a chance of living with honour, for he was a man who evolved for himself a set of principles, tried sincerely to adhere to them and achieved a considerable measure of success in attaining his goals, for he had to fight against the mediaeval rule of an autocratic and tyrannical ruler, one of these maintained by the British in the princely states.

And regretfully but logically another long line of those who, as the freedom movement developed and objectives began to change and new forces arose, parted company, perhaps on a question of political principles or rivalries, e.g. Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah, or perhaps because of unfulfilled ambition in those who had achieved some importance and could now go no further, or even those who had their own political axes to grind. But for whatever reason they parted he always showed and spoke of them with respect, as they themselves reiterated.

Meeting him now in these later years and remembering the long list of people, all with their own ideals or motives, but finally deciding, somewhat regretfully to part company on a question of differing political beliefs or personal aims, my foremost thought was that in spite of very rich remembrances of the times through which he had lived and his own outstanding achievements how lonely he must now be and to some extent disillusioned—so many old comrades and friends now gone from this earth, so many also divided from him and his realisation of how, for political motives he had sometimes been betrayed and used at different times by various groups.

For example after he had been jailed without trial by the Nehru Government in 1953 it was our general belief in Pakistan that he had been deceived by the Congress leaders and betrayed by Nehru and that if he had not been persuaded to leave the Muslim Conference for the National Conference the Muslims of the sub-continent would have benefited from his great leadership.

By now in Kashmir there were a few leaders of public opinion such as Khawaja Saaduddin Shahl (who had just returned to the

Valley after three years of exile) Maulvi Muhammad Abdullah, Advocate and Munshi Shahabuddin, who realised that unless someone was built up into a national leader it was difficult to start a movement and sustain it. Such a person needed youth, stamina, resilience, qualities of leadership and sincerity of purpose. He had also to be a man of the people, although no nation can depend for its survival or progress on one individual no matter how compelling or heroic. So after Sheikh Abdullah's first arrest on July 14th, 1931 they and others understood that this was the man for them to lead the people—he had come at a time in history when he was needed. Therefore, they, along with Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah and other lesser workers all began to build him up before the people. Here was a man, tall, impressive, fearless, steadfast in his own religion but respecting that of others, sincere in purpose, understanding his people and their problems because he was one with them. Here was a leader who looked like a leader, talked like a leader, thought like a leader and judged like a leader.

Born posthumously on December 5th, 1905, in Saura village on the outskirts of Srinagar, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was brought up by his widowed mother and his elder brothers, Sheikh Ghulam Mohyuddin and Sheikh Muhammad Maqbool. His father had died two months earlier, leaving behind his widow, five sons and a daughter. The brothers were engaged in the shawl trade and were of moderate means, seeing people around them living in abject poverty. They decided to educate him so that he would have a career by which he could earn.

Both the uncles were keen that Sheikh Abdullah should study and all his education was achieved on scholarships. He did his F.Sc. from Sri Partap College and cycled or walked 10 k.m. each way in order to reach the college. In those days Saura was a village and had no electricity so he had to study by lamplight. All the family were deeply religious and thus from childhood he was given a good religious training, especially by Sheikh Ghulam Mohyuddin. Having a naturally melodious voice he at an early age began to recite passages from the Holy *Koran* and this gift stood him in good stead all through his political life.

In those days as a schoolboy he saw the great poverty of the villagers who lived in mud huts and was much grieved by their condition. One day in an argument with a Hindu officer he saw his own uncle, Sheikh Muhammad Khalil, slapped on the face. This indignity to a respectable shawl merchant he could not forget.

He was influenced from youth by the spirit of *Sufi*-ism—the *Sufi* saints and the *rishis*—their teachings of love, tolerance and peace.

Both at Islamia College, Lahore and Aligarh Muslim University he came in touch with prominent Muslim thinkers and public men who influenced him to a great extent. It was from Aligarh that he began on his course of rescuing *Kashmiris* from the feudal order and terminating the humiliating and discriminatory treatment meted out to Muslim masses, who constituted 85% of the population of the State. He, along with other fresh Muslim graduates, back from Aligarh University in 1930 who were jobless, began to use the Reading Room Party started in 1929 with G. N. Gilkar and Sheikh Abdullah as founder members. Sardar Gohar Rehman also started the Muslim Young Men's Association at Jammu. Both were used as a cover for discussing the problems of the Muslim masses, because politics as such were banned in the State at that time. Young men in Srinagar also met in the evenings in the back of the shop premises of Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller, a dear friend of Sheikh Abdullah, ostensibly to listen to the music of a well-known harmonium player, Pandit Gope Nath (who is still alive) but really to discuss politics.

Sheikh Abdullah took up the cause of spearheading the revolt of his people at a time when revolution was in the air of the sub-continent. He, like numerous others of his time, had grown up in the midst of the anti-Imperialist mass movements of the twenties and thirties. This was the age of the liberation struggles of the people of Asia and Africa, of which the movements in the sub-continent were also a part. He was distinctive in having a deep understanding of his own world and its problems and insight into how to motivate his people into being involved in the conflict to change such a world. Thus for him it was a lifelong struggle for the cause which he had espoused from the very beginning of his career.

Later Sheikh Abdullah felt that the real fight was not between two religions or two religious groups but between the haves and have-nots, the oppressed and the oppressor and that one must serve not one group but all humanity—irrespective of caste, creed or colour. After the Muslim Conference had been converted into the National Conference in 1938 communalism was denounced and then he consistently worked for communal harmony. Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller, however, became a member of the State Assembly

after 1944 and in January, 1947 was elected as Deputy Leader of the Muslim Conference Parliamentary group, with Chaudhry Hamidullah Khan as Leader.

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¹ Bazaz, Nagin, "Ahead Of His Times, Prem Nath Bazaz", p. 36, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1983.

² Bazaz, Prem Nath, "Kashmir Ka Gandhi", p. 55.

LIVING IN KASHMIR, 1941-42

In 1941 we were back again in Srinagar in September as my husband had accepted the Principalship of Srinagar's Sri Partap College, replacing Maulvi Ibrahim, who then became Director of Education.

A group of persons wanted to demonstrate against the appointment of a non-Kashmiri as the Principal. *Sheikh sahib* went to Amirakadal and made one of his celebrated speeches to the effect that they should feel honoured that an educationist of such eminence had consented to join Jammu and Kashmir Education Service. He observed that in principle he was with them in not having a non-Kashmiri in an executive post, but that if they wanted to protest they should first start by asking the Prime Minister to go, as he was a non-Kashmiri, in fact from Madras. At once the protest died down. This incident is related by Mr. Rashid Taseer in his book¹ and was referred to by Mir Muhammad Qasim, former Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, in my interview with him on September 13th, 1983.

Taseer joined the college and *Sheikh sahib* used to go there to meet him and also to Taj Mahal Hotel, for they had many important problems to discuss. The other workers of the National Conference were also available in the vicinity of the college. Besides *Sheikh sahib* there would be Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, Miss Mahmuda Ali, who later became the Principal of the first Government Women's Degree College in the Valley (Maulana Azad Government Women's College) until political differences made her part company with the National Conference. There was Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, whom we all thought of in those days as more of a street corner orator, even though he was so important to Sheikh Abdullah. No-one, except perhaps he himself in his secret thoughts, could have dreamt then that the time would come when he, an 8th class pass student, would rise to such heights that he would intrigue to topple the Lion of Kashmir in 1953 and take his place for a reign of ten years of dictatorship and corruption. Mr. S. L. Sadhu, an educationist who

was on the teaching staff of Sri Partap College in 1941 recalled *Sheikh sahib* coming to visit my husband there and the two discussing a campaign for adult literacy being launched by the State Education Department under the leadership of Prof. K. G. Saiyidain, Education Minister and the inspiration of the then Prime Minister, Gopalaswamy Ayyangar.²

In the summer months the Leftists from different parts of India would also be there, mixing with and influencing the National Conference workers. One particularly popular couple were the *Bedis*. Mr. B. P. L. Bedi and his English wife, Freda, a graduate from an English University, had been known to us since our marriage in 1936. Both husband and wife were dedicated Marxists to the extent that they integrated in the environment in which they were then living by constructing a glorified brick and mud hut for their residence in Model Town, Lahore, without electricity or formal furniture and both dressed in *khaddar*. But they did make the concession of spending their summers in Kashmir. They both went to jail for some months in the Quit India Movement.

From 1937, Fazl Ilahi Qurban and Prof. Abdullah Safdar, both Moscow trained workers, began visiting the State. Dr. K. M. Ashraf, Mr. P. C. Joshi, also used to go there. Mr. B. P. L. Bedi began to visit the State and by the end of 1942 was successful in winning over the sympathies of Sheikh Abdullah and G. M. Sadiq. Others whose ways of thinking were won over by the Marxists were D. P. Dhar, Miss Mahmuda Ali, Ghulam Mohiuddin Kara, Girdhari Lal Dogra and a number of workers in the Freedom Movement of a less important category.

While they were in Lahore the *Bedis* were busy in motivating the student community and the "New Kashmir" manifesto was drafted from their Model Town hut before 1944 by those involved.

They then moved on to Delhi, where we used to meet them in 1945-47 winters. But it was while they were in Lahore in the early forties that they along with others helped in the planning of what was to be the New Kashmir, along with Dr. Asif Ali and his wife, of the Congress High Command and my husband, according to G. M. Sadiq and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas in their books.^{3, 4}

After 1947 the *Bedis* settled in Kashmir for a short period. B. P. L. Bedi became Adviser in Chief to Sheikh Abdullah when the

latter became Prime Minister at the beginning of 1948. During the days of Emergency Administration and two years thereafter he was in charge of the Counter-Propaganda Department of the Jammu and Kashmir Government. His wife, Freda, was associated with many official activities. She was the most important member of the Text-book Committee which prepared and published books for use in the State schools. She served in the Relief Committee formed by Begum Abdullah, who from that time was known as *Madr-e-Meherban*, for helping those who had suffered economically by the losses from the failure of the Tourism Programmes in 1947 and 1948, following the division of the subcontinent and then taught in the English Department of the newly opened Maulana Azad Government Women's College, Srinagar.

Now came a very happy occasion for us all on October 28th of that year, 1941. My sister and Faiz Ahmed Faiz had decided to marry so the marriage took place from our home in Srinagar. None of us wanted the "*nikah*" to be performed only by a *maulvi*, believing that it should be carried out by a good man, as enjoined by Islam, although the *maulvi* would also be present. Being in Kashmir for us the "good man" was Sheikh Abdullah and he agreed to perform the "*nikah*". This took place in what was actually the old *maharani's* palace by the side of the river, a very grand place—though very chilly by October 28th, the date of the "*nikah*"—which had been allotted to my husband as a residence until a suitable house was vacant. The witnesses to the "*nikah*" who signed the "*nikahnama*", besides Sheikh Abdullah were Dr. Noor Hussain, Health Officer, Srinagar, an ardent supporter of *Sheikh sahib*, G. M. Sadiq, Dr. M. D. Taseer, Tufail Ahmed (Faiz's elder brother). Most of the guests, such as Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad were of course *Kashmiris*, but Josh Maliabadi, the poet, who happened to be in Srinagar at that time, was part of Faiz's "*barat*". The next day *Sheikh sahib* invited Alys and Faiz to lunch with him and *Begumsahiba* in their city home and my sister remembers a four years' old Farooq running in and out of the rooms.

This period in our married life was a very happy one. We were living in a house in a beautiful situation, in a salubrious climate, with hosts of *Kashmiri* friends, and were completely integrated in their distinct cultural pattern and understood and were in full sympathy with their struggle to achieve their national freedom from an alien subjugation.

In those times the boat people who lived in their wooden *doongas* on the water and earned by fishing, etc., kept their own little vegetable gardens—literally floating gardens made of a compost of heaped dried weeds lifted out of the Dal Lake—with them and as they moved from place to place on the different parts of the Lake or the river, towed their gardens behind them. Now with the expansion of tourism and growth of population there is one large “floating garden” in the middle of the Dal Lake where the gardeners live on its edges in wooden two-storeyed houses and cultivate vegetables for sale.

All through 1942 Durga Parshad Dhar, a *Pandit*, then still a student, was a regular visitor to our home each evening. He and my husband used to discuss the politics and future of Kashmir after my plump roly-poly infant, Mariam, born the previous winter in that very house had finished welcoming him. At that time he was a highly intelligent, but restless young man, a Marxist, pockmarked but handsome, with an invalid wife and one son. He was then a member of the All Jammu and Kashmir Press Conference, along with Allah Rakhar, Sagar, Janki Nath Zutshi and others.

D. P. Dhar was first a student of S. P. College, Srinagar and after completing his Law from Lucknow University he became associated with the *Progressive Writers' Association*, of which the first branch had been started in London in 1935 by Sajjad Zaheer, Dr. Taseer, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, Iqbal Singh and one or two others. He joined the National Conference and was with Sheikh Abdullah, but was also a very active member of the Leftists along with G. M. Sadiq. He was arrested in the Quit Kashmir Movement and released after two or three days, when he joined Sadiq and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad in Lahore. They all returned to Srinagar after August 14th, 1947 and were there when Sheikh Abdullah was released from jail on September 29th.

In January 1948, D. P. Dhar was sent as Assistant to Sheikh Abdullah, himself a member of the Indian Delegation to the U. N. Security Council Session at Lake Success, New York, over the Kashmir case. He was given the responsibility of seeing that Sheikh Abdullah and the members of the Pakistan delegation did not get a chance of meeting together, but nevertheless Sheikh Abdullah's people did report to Dr. Taseer each evening and then D. P. Dhar would report back to the Indian delegation!

The Security Council met on January 31st, 1952 to consider the report about demilitarization of Jammu and Kashmir. Negotiations continued throughout the year in New York and then in Geneva. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. Ayyangar and included D. P. Dhar, then still a Deputy Minister in Jammu and Kashmir, having been appointed in 1948. By 1952, still a Deputy Minister he was clear in his mind that Sheikh Abdullah was not prepared for full accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, so he encouraged the extremist movements there.

After Pandit Nehru had come to Pakistan in 1960 to meet President Ayub Khan over the Indus Basin Treaty, D. P. Dhar came in 1962 on behalf of India prior to the Tashkent Agreement meeting. From Islamabad he tried to find my whereabouts as he had not seen me since those happy meetings of 1942, when my husband was alive. By that time I was living in Karachi with my son, Salman, so he left a message with Mr. Manzur Qadir, Pakistan's then Foreign Minister, that he should contact me and extend an invitation on his behalf to visit India as his guest. But before I could take advantage of this invitation as he died of a heart attack in June, 1975, still a comparatively young man.

When Mrs. Indira Gandhi took over as Prime Minister, Dhar became Advisor of Foreign Affairs to the Indian Government and later its Planning Chief. He went to Spain and on return gave a report to the Indian Government regarding the cause of the downfall in Spain of the Muslim empire. He was posted as Ambassador to Moscow in 1967.

Dr. Karan Singh, *Sadar-i-Riyasat*, Jammu and Kashmir, has said in his autobiography, as regards D. P. Dhar's role in Jammu and Kashmir after 1947:

“He was excellent at army—civil liaisons and acted as a valuable link between the State Government and the Government of India. He had a remarkable mind, which, however, he turned generally to brilliant manoeuvring rather than solid achievement.”⁵

which lends credence to the assertion of Mr. K. H. Khurshid, one time President of Azad Kashmir, that he was spying on Sheikh Abdullah before the latter's dismissal from office in 1953.

Kashmiris in Srinagar whom I met firmly believe that D. P. Dhar had been the master mind in creating the plan supposedly deliberately carried out, to drive a wedge between the people of the two wings of Pakistan so as to result in the tragedy of December, 1971. After being posted to Moscow as Ambassador in 1967 he was responsible for the Indo-Soviet Military Co-operation Pact to facilitate the separation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan.

Sheikh Abdullah had been externed from the State in January, 1971 along with Mirza Afzal Beg and was allowed to return only after the dismemberment of East Pakistan from West Pakistan, i.e. 18 months after, in June, 1972 when Bangladesh was an accomplished fact. Because of Bangladesh he was kept in Delhi until the whole operation was settled. People in Kashmir would have asked Sheikh Abdullah what was his opinion about the separation into two parts of a Muslim state. He could not have said "India had no right to interfere."

During the summer of 1942 out of the several friends who came from either Lahore, Amritsar or Delhi to stay with us for a while was a guest whose son was afterwards to achieve fame as the winner of the Booker Literature Prize for 1981—she was Zohra, who married a Mr. Rushdie of Delhi, was renamed by him as "Nageen" and whose famous son, born in Bombay at midnight, August 14th, 15th, 1947 was named after our son, Salman—in fact he was Salman Rushdie, author of "*Midnight Children*" and "*Shame*".

Taseer absorbed himself in the work of his college, firstly the Intermediate College, Sri Partap and then as Principal of the first Degree College of the Valley, Amar Singh College. His old students forty years later still talked with affection of how they remembered him as a teacher and Principal. Once home in the evening, either on his bed or under the trees in the garden according to the season with pipe, silver box full of betel leaves by his side, pen and paper in hand and a pile of reference material nearby, this was his pattern of living when we were not receiving guests or friends, so the shape of the rules imposed upon State servants of the *Maharaja's* regime soon began to irk. Every Sunday morning it was expected of them to call upon the superior officers of their department, a practice he couldn't bear. Each year the *Maharaja* held a grand *darbar* in Srinagar, which every officer in his service must attend clad in a silk *sherwani* and carrying a silk purse with a gold coin in it for presentation—this was a ritual pledge of allegiance to his master.

After nearly two years of this kind of life, in spite of the fact that we were so very happy in Kashmir and loved the people and felt completely integrated with them he couldn't continue to condone what he called "the double corruption"—that of the British *raj* upon a *Dogra maharaja* and that of a *Dogra* ruler upon a Muslim population, which pervaded every aspect of life. As he put it tersely:—

"I have to leave. Either I shall go mad or I shall have to begin to think and behave as most *Kashmiris* are compelled by circumstances to think and behave nowadays and that will be the end of me!"

And so unhappily we left the *Maharaja's* service but not the cause of Kashmir, which was always with my husband until his death in 1950.

Walter R. Lawrence, Settlement Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir State had said in 1895:

"A man who can be beaten and robbed by anyone with a vestige of authority soon ceases to respect himself and his fellow-men and it is useless to look for the virtues of a free people among the *Kashmiris*. The *Kashmiri* is what his rulers have made him."⁶

However, Pearce Gervis in his book which describes the landscape, society, religion and geography of Kashmir, has amplified the special causes which made the *Kashmiri* what he became through the centuries:

"Some of the factors which have contributed to the character of the *Kashmiris* are:

—Devastating earthquakes, recorded in 1500, 1552, 1662, 1735, 1778, 1884, some of which lasted for three or more months and in which thousands of houses were destroyed, lives lost and heads of cattle killed.

—Floods, recorded in 1379, 1746, 1787, each causing the destruction of thousands of houses.

—Famines—mostly brought on by untimely rains or snow-fall—recorded in 1832, 1864 and 1877, when two-thirds of

the population died of starvation and in spite of some relief the famine went on for 2½ years and many families emigrated to the Punjab.

—Invading armies, living on the land and plundering it have also been responsible.

—Epidemics, the worst being cholera, starting from 1604. Between 1783 and 1910 there were 15 visitations of cholera, all resulting in thousands of deaths.

All these epidemics and natural calamities, in addition to conquerors, oppressors and masters, who throughout the centuries took and held the state in their power, have contributed.

"The people were starved, they learned to lie in order to save themselves, they learned to trust no stranger, they learned to hoard and hide, to steal when the chance presented itself."⁷

"In 1912, Dr. Ernest Neve, who had worked for years in the Mission Hospital at Dal Gate, said:

'The *Kashmiri* is highly strung and neurotic and will often weep on slight provocation.'

His explanation of their 'cowardice' was that it was a neurotic state into which they had been driven over the generations of oppression."

Sheikh Abdullah, Lion of Kashmir, was the courageous one who recognised all this even before 1930, in fact from his childhood and made it his mission in life for more than fifty years to struggle to change the character of his people for he believed in humanity and most important of all he loved humanity. The fact that he succeeded in this no-one can deny. Throughout his struggle he gave priority to bringing about socio-economic development reforms, to the awakening of those in the rural areas. He laid great emphasis on mass involvement in order to ensure that the entire nation would be motivated to sustain the momentum of such development.

In a letter to me of January 2nd, 1981 Sheikh Abdullah had written:

"The aim of my whole public life, spanning more than four decades has been service to the people and in the pursuit of this objective I had to suffer many ups and downs. But looking back in retrospect to the years that have gone by I feel convinced that we can realise our aspirations only after we have gone through sufferings and vicissitudes in life. I have no regrets on this score."

Dr. Karan Singh, son of Maharaja Hari Singh who signed the Deed of Succession to India of Jammu and Kashmir on October 26th, 1947 from Jammu, who was Regent of Jammu and Kashmir State up to 1952 and *Sadar-i-Riyasat*, 1952-65, has said in his autobiography:

"Despite our sharp political differences during and after the period covered by this volume, we retained cordial personal relations till the end. There is no doubt that he was one of the tallest *Kashmiris*, both literally and figuratively and that he made a unique contribution to the development of the *Kashmiri* people over the last half century. His role in opposing communal forces during the turbulent years of Partition will long be remembered."⁸

It is, therefore, somewhat ironic that it was Dr. Karan Singh himself who ordered the dismissal and arrest of Sheikh Abdullah from Gulmarg on August 9th, 1953 and his replacement as head of the administration by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad who, along with G. M. Sadiq and D. P. Dhar were, it is said spying and reporting on Sheikh Abdullah to Delhi.

In the first chapter of his book Dr. Karan Singh refers to Sheikh Abdullah as a "hitherto obscure school teacher", while conveniently omitting to mention that this man who was the first *Kashmiri* Muslim in the State to become an M.Sc. was a school teacher only because the *Maharaja's* Civil Service Recruitment Board which had recently been set up, had framed certain rules which appeared intentionally to prevent the entry of Muslims into Government service, for besides other strict requirements the maximum age for recruitment was fixed at twenty-two years so that those Muslims who returned from Aligarh University with one or more post-graduate degrees were clearly debarred from recruitment. My friend Begum Zafar Ali, M.L.A. of Srinagar remembered this incident for her father, Agha Syed Hussain, was Law and Education Minister in the

Maharaja's cabinet at that time and had recommended Sheikh Abdullah's application for a College Lectureship, which was not given to him.

Karan Singh, however, does mention that when he was hospitalised in New York, in December, 1947 at the Hospital for Special Surgery, 321, E. 42nd Street, as a young boy for hip surgery, Sheikh Abdullah who was in New York only for 10 days in January, 1948 as a member of the Indian delegation to the U.N. Session at Lake Success on the Kashmir problem, found the time to pay him a visit. This was the first time he had seen Sheikh Abdullah, with whom he was to be so much involved in future years.

Mischief-makers in India were endeavouring to promote communal feelings in Jammu province, influenced by such situations in other parts of India and Nehru's Home Ministry was manned at that time by an inefficient person. Kashmir's internal situation was uncertain. In a speech at Mujahid Manzil on 10th July Sheikh Abdullah (believing that he had the support of the United States) proclaimed that Kashmir should become independent. Nehru did not interfere on hearing this, nor did he offer his advice to Karan Singh, *Sadr-i-Riyasat*, when he came to New Delhi, on any precise line of action. There was now no communication between Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah. So Nehru was prepared for the dismissal of Abdullah on 9th August, 1953. He wrote to G. S. Bajpai on 24th August, 1953:

"For the last three months I have seen this coming... I did not of course know the exact shape it would take. To the last moment I was not clear what exactly would happen."

So in reality it was only part of what had happened that was without the knowledge of Nehru.

He was arrested under the Public Security Act and he was taken to Udampur, forty miles from Jammu and detained there in a palace of the former *Maharaja*. Later he was shifted to Kud Special Jail. The arrest was said to have been carried out without the knowledge of Pandit Nehru but in his biography of Jawaharlal Nehru Sarvepalli Gopal describes that actually for some months in 1953 correspondence had been going on between Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah, Maulana Azad (Education Minister) regarding the deteriorating situation in Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah wanted autonomy, as he had

wanted it in 1947 when the possibility of his joining Pakistan had been debated. He had written to Nehru as early as 10-7-50:

"I have several times stated that despite our having so many affinities with Pakistan we did not join it because we thought our programme would not fit in with their policy."

Leaving aside the people of Sheikh Abdullah's own State there were only two or three politicians in India at the time of his arrest such as Jaya Parkash Narain, Miradullah Sarabai, Pandit Lakhanpal, who made a protest. Both the Rightist and Leftist parties approved of his removal, the Leftists because he was said to have been meeting U.S. statesmen in Srinagar and intriguing for an independent Kashmir, the Rightists because he crushed the movement of Parja Parshad in Jammu and jailed the famous Hindu leader, Dr. Sharma Parshad Mukerjee, who died in jail.

As I have mentioned elsewhere it was regrettably Sheikh Abdullah's own trusted co-workers—D. P. Dhar, G. M. Sadiq and G. L. Dogra, who conspired with Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad to bring about his dismissal and arrest in 1953.

Mr. Ian Stephens, author and journalist had an interview in Srinagar with Sheikh Abdullah just before his dismissal in 1953 and has written:

"The impression left on my mind was of a courageous, forthright, vigorous man; intelligent, though without great intellectual range—gifted with a strong personality and therefore probably an inspiring leader of the downtrodden."

"He was obviously non-communal, wholeheartedly so. Pre-eminently he appeared to me a *Kashmiri* patriot: full of zeal to improve his countrymen's plight; pre-occupied with the Vale, the centre and motive of his whole political life; little concerned with the rest of the subcontinent's affairs."

"His exclusive pre-occupation with his homeland in disregard to the gigantic changes shaping elsewhere, no doubt partly explained his crucial decision in 1947 to join India—a decision which had swayed the lives of millions. His imprisonments, too, must have been a factor: he had been cut off, in fast-changing times, from discussing new political trends, or from meeting

most of the nationalist Muslims then turning away from the Congress. It emerged from what he said that he did not at first take the idea of Pakistan seriously, nor expect her, when eventually created, to survive. Many others, better placed misjudged likewise.

"I saw in him a man of pluck and enlightenment, standing for principles good in their way; a victim, like so many of us, of the unique scope and speed and confusion of the changes in 1947, and now holding a perhaps uniquely lonely and perplexing post."¹⁰

Ian Stephens, author of several books on Pakistan was editor of the British owned Calcutta "*Statesman*" from 1942-51, a crucial period of the freedom movement in Indian history, which resulted in the emergence of India and Pakistan as two independent nations. He was an admirer of Quaid-i-Azam and had several interviews with him, the last in February, 1948. In spite of its being British owned he followed an independent policy in his newspaper, especially after Partition and in his editorial on Kashmir entitled "*Dangerous Moves*" of 28-10-47 he suggested that Kashmir should join Pakistan. Lord Mountbatten, Viceroy of India, was disturbed by the editorial and Ian Stephens was called by him to Delhi and threatened on behalf of the Indian Cabinet unless his paper adopted a more pro-Indian line. It was because of the atmosphere of heavy suspicion of his paper in not committing itself whole-heartedly to the Indian point of view *vis-a-vis* Pakistan through the articles for which he was responsible, that he decided to resign from his editorship in 1951.

After Sheikh Abdullah's arrest in 1953 Lord Birdwood wrote in his book:

"If and when Abdullah returns to the scene of political controversy it may well be found that he has absorbed wisdom through bitter experience. If so he will constitute an influence which whether in control or in opposition will be impossible to ignore."¹¹

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KASHMIR 1980

THE LION OF KASHMIR (SHER-I-KASHMIR)

In 1980 I would have never dreamt of being able to meet Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah who, since 1975 was now installed as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, except for Rajbans Khanna himself who, along with some members of his family arrived as a refugee from Lahore in the summer of 1947 and who, along with Fredi Bedi and her husband, Mr. B. P. L. Bedi, had helped for some months from 1948 in *Sheikh sahib's* administration in Kashmir in laying the foundations of what was called the "New Kashmir" before ill health forced him to leave and settle in Bombay. He himself wrote to Sheikh Abdullah that I would like to visit the Valley in the forthcoming summer as a tourist. He wrote on 16-5-80:—

"You will remember Dr. M. D. Taseer, the Principal of the Srinagar College in the days when you were fighting determinedly for the freedom of Kashmir. Dr. Taseer as you know was the focal point of all the progressive Muslim intellectuals in North India and inspirer of many new ideas."

"I keep reading in the various newspapers about the tremendous efforts that you put in for the progress of Kashmir and the betterment of the lot of its people and I wish you every success in that."

A very welcoming letter came from Sheikh Abdullah to Rajbans, dated 28th June 1980, which he sent on to me, in which he said that:—

"We will do our best (he never referred to himself in administration as "I") to see that she has an interesting and enjoyable time and I will indeed be happy to meet her."

"We have so much to accomplish and so much to do here that we are in fact engaged in a race against time. God Almighty grant us strength to be of service to the people."

Then a very welcoming letter came from Sheikh Abdullah to me. I have these two letters in my possession. Thus in July-August, 1980 I spent a month in the Valley, taking with me a seventeen year old Lahore college arts student, Tarfa. I was fortunate to have her with me for she was a friendly, outgoing girl, a very good companion and got on extremely well with all those who we met.

Once our plans were made I joined the Punjab University Library and conscientiously began to read what books I could find on the Kashmir question by *Pakistani*, Indian, British and American authors, only to find as I read how little I actually knew about the subject which, over the years had grown into a problem with such ramifications that it seemed there could be no solution. Nor could I equate the various slants of some of the authors I had consulted and the responsibilities which they laid on Sheikh Abdullah's doorstep for the happenings of 1947 and after and for his shifts in policy, with what I had learnt from my husband and his family in Lahore in earlier years. However, I had made a beginning! I decided it would be best to ask those people who had been associated with him and his mission from the beginning—political associates or their families or friends, freedom fighters, not forgetting friends and sympathisers, as and when I could meet them. And this is what I did.

On the 18th July Tarfa and I went by road up to Amritsar across the Wagah/Attari border; visited the Golden Temple and then caught the midday flight (Delhi—Amritsar—Srinagar) and in forty-five minutes reached Srinagar airport. On our flight was a *Pakistani* from Islamabad who was visiting his family in the Valley after twenty-three years, having only now been given the necessary visa by the Indian Government. There were nearly three hundred *Kashmiri* relatives and friends in the airport to receive him!

On the morning after our arrival at Nedous Hotel in Srinagar, where we had booked in, we were called to meet *Sheikh sahib* in the garden adjoining his house, which was just one hundred yards from the hotel. This morning period was the time he reserved for meeting visitors before going to his office.

I wondered what would be my first reaction to meeting him after a gap of so many years—thirty-three to be exact—when I used to meet him formally as the wife of a great friend at a time when his own wife still observed *purdah*. Now I found a seventy-four years'

old soft spoken, mellowed, gentle person, but one with the same strong, obstinate jaw which had given him the reputation all through the years of his leadership of being very stubborn and tenacious. *Sher-i-Kashmir* no longer roared, but he showed shyness in personal relations and was above all simple, with a warm, sweet smile and a way of putting one at ease at once. One could not think in terms of his being a Chief Minister. This was his own special gift in human relationships.

To be a Prime Minister or Chief Minister of as sensitive a State as Jammu and Kashmir is enough to age any man and the energetic glow of strength and purpose which *Sheikh sahib* had first brought to his office in 1947 had by now begun to dim under the difficulties he had to face through the years of his first term of office, his incarcerations and externments, and especially now in again picking up the threads of his second term of office after a gap of twenty-two years. During this period there had been significant changes in the politics and administration of his own state and great changes on a world level in the sphere of power politics. An old friend of *Sheikh sahib's*, Agha Iftikhar, said to me in Srinagar:

"His greatest achievements were made before he went to jail in 1953 because by the time he came into office again in 1975, aged nearly 70 years, he had naturally not the same vigour and the various terms of jail, confinements, illness, betrayal of some people and externment from his homeland which he had undergone, had made inroads upon his health. He could administer, make speeches to the same huge, rapt audiences but his pace had of necessity slowed down. When he came into power in 1975 the doctors, it is said, had given him six months of life, but he disproved their predictions."

Some cynics said that this was an error of judgement on the part of Mrs. Gandhi in accepting what his physicians had predicted and coming to an agreement with Sheikh Abdullah on the basis of the Kashmir Accord!

Sheikh Abdullah was the first Chief Minister Tarfa and I had met so I was surprised at his entire simplicity in dress and surroundings. He was keen to receive news of old Lahore friends but Tarfa and I were the ones who talked the most for we were having an entirely new experience—meeting a Chief Minister informally and all to ourselves. And *Sheikh sahib*—with his great affection and

belief in young people everywhere—wanted information from Tarfa about the progress and conditions of the student community in Pakistan.

I had with me as a present for him an LP of *Ghazals* written by my husband and sung on Lahore TV station and also his photograph. I mentioned that the words of the song, "*Rang Rangeela Chokra*" had been composed when we lived in Kashmir and he was returning to Srinagar from a Punjab Senate meeting in Lahore *via* the Jammu route in 1942.

Tarfa and I each took photographs of the other sitting next to *Sheikh sahib*, smiling and relaxed, holding the hand of friendship and then he called his personal secretary, who was with him up to the time of his demise on September 8th, 1982, Om Parkash Gupta, to plan some excursions and visits for us to ongoing projects, one being run by his wife Akbar Jehan Begum. This is Maskeenbagh, a complex with an orphanage, a widows' home, a carpet weaving section, a workshop for cutting, sewing and embroidery, typewriting classes and so on. In all the training programmes preference is given to widows and orphans. When we visited this project two days later I told *Begumsahiba* that she was one of the women I most admired because of the very unusual and sacrificing life she had led as the wife of a leader who had spent nearly eighteen years in jail or exile, and more than twenty years in a "political wilderness" as it was called by some magazines, while she herself was at one time exiled to Delhi for three years away from her husband and could not go to Kashmir to meet her family.

This was only one example of the simplicity of Sheikh Abdullah in human relationships which I found very endearing. How many leaders of a nation involved in political tussles would take time off so soon to listen to a record of *ghazals* of an old friend not seen since 1948 and who had died nearly two years later?

If we had reached Srinagar three—four weeks earlier we would have had the distinction of meeting the controversial Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, called the Frontier Gandhi by the Indian Congress in order to flatter him and keep him with them. He was in Srinagar in June as the guest of Sheikh Abdullah for twenty days or so far rest and a change because his *arthritis* was so troublesome. At that time he was reputedly already ninety-three years of age and moved with difficulty. He was one of the survivors of a turbulent era, a

veteran of the freedom movement which purged the subcontinent of British rule. He had served thirty-two years in prisons both under the British and later in Pakistan.

Ghaffar Khan is reported to have said in an interview in Srinagar on June 2nd, 1980 with B. L. Kak, journalist and author:

"I am glad to know that Sheikh Abdullah has done well as the leader of the *Kashmiris*. I know him very well. I have found him earnestly religious and deeply interested in preserving and promoting Islamic culture and institutions in the country. I strongly feel that there is a good deal of scope for his followers to progress under his leadership."¹

He said in a function in Phulwari-sharif in 1981:

"In India today almost all politicians have become corrupt and greedy, they do not really want to serve the people. Was our struggle for freedom to replace the British rulers by Indian rulers who capture power and exploit the masses as the British did?"

In the evening of the 19th Om Parkash (or "*Om*" as *Sheikh sahib* fondly called him) came to our hotel room to inform us that next morning he was to accompany us on a tour of the various Moghul Gardens—Nishat Bagh, Shalimar and Chashma Shahi, from which rich tourists used to have their drinking water brought daily because of its special medicinal qualities, and that we would finish up at Dachigam Wild Animal Sanctuary, twelve miles from Srinagar, then have lunch with *Sheikh sahib* in the beautiful shooting lodge built by Maharaja Hari Singh for his own relaxation, four miles inside the reserve of Dachigam by the mountain side, from which he used to hunt black bear, wild boar and the magnificent hangul. This lodge was burnt down in 1965 and re-built about three years later by Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, then Prime Minister.

We visited all the beautiful gardens with Om Parkash, the terraced gardens of Jehangir and Nur Jehan—prim rows of cypress trees through which cascades of water tumble down to the Dal Lake, the magnificent plane trees of Nasim Bagh, snapped some photos and arrived by 1.30 p.m. at the Dachigam shooting lodge, having driven through several miles of tranquil, quiet forest.

When we reached the shooting lodge and walked inside to view

the rooms we were told, "Shush, *Sheikh sahib* is saying his prayers" and through the slightly open bedroom door we could see him. When he was ready we all went in to lunch. Dr. Farooq Abdullah, *Sheikh sahib's* eldest son, at that time a member of Lok Sabha, was present at the table as well as the Information Director, who said he had read my son's recently published book on Bhutto and found it extremely good, which pleased me very much.

At one meeting with *Sheikh sahib* I had expressed a desire for a signed photograph of him and the next morning he gave me an autographed formal one of himself in suit and tie, with a severe expression on his face, looking very much a Chief Minister. I shook my head and said regretfully:—

"I really wanted a photo of you as Sher-i-Kashmir, which is how I first heard about you in 1937."

"Very well, I'll find one for you" he replied and the next morning returned with an earlier one of himself in *khaddar kurta, pyjama*, waistcoat and cap and a beaming smile.

"That's fine" I said and kept both the autographed photos!

One evening when *Sheikh sahib* called Tarfa and me across to have salted tea in his garden there was a very old *Parsi* gentleman friend of his sitting there, a Mr. Pestonji. He was the last one left of his family, which hailed from Bombay and which had had a shop on the Bund for many years. Now he was alone in Srinagar, for the younger generations had moved to other parts.

We learnt that the family had been friends of Quaid-i-Azam and his youthful wife, Ratanbai, daughter of Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit. In his book "*Jinnah of Pakistan*" Stanley Wolport writes that born in 1900, Ruttie (as she was known) married Jinnah in 1918 in Bombay, having embraced Islam three days earlier and given the name of Mariam, which she never used, as she was known to everyone as Ruttie. At that time Jinnah was nearly forty-two years of age. Her family were very orthodox *Parsies* and after her marriage according to Muslim rites she was disowned by them. Being very lonely she became interested in mysticism.²

Some years after marriage they made a visit to Kashmir in 1926, where according to Mr. Pestonjee, Jinnah spent the first night of his

arrival in Srinagar in his house. Then Ruttie fell seriously ill, had treatment in a Paris clinic and died in Bombay in 1929, being buried according to Muslim rites, so her father refused to attend the funeral.³

Mr. M. C. Chagla, who was in his early days a junior of Jinnah's in Bombay, says about the marriage in his autobiography:

"Her father never forgave her, never saw her again."

"There was some litigation in court because of disparity in age between the two and because Jinnah wanted to convert Ruttie to Islam before marriage."⁴

According to Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Jeweller of Srinagar, a friend from the days when Sheikh Abdullah first returned from Aligarh in 1930 and who kept a diary, Quaid-i-Azam also visited Srinagar in 1935 just after he had returned from U.K. to assume the Presidentship of the All India Muslim League. He was accompanied by his sister, Miss Fatima Jinnah and pleaded in four cases in Srinagar, two criminal, two civil. This was his second visit.

Mirza A. Hassan Ispahani, one of his closest friends from Cambridge University since 1920, who worked as a Barrister in the Inner Temple, London and became a member of the League's new Central Parliamentary Board in 1936, said of that time:

"He was always coughing and smoking, but no one realised the extent of his illness."⁵

WE VISIT LEH—THE ROOF TOP OF THE WORLD

While Tarfa and I were in Srinagar, after reading the Guide Book Section on Laddakh we decided that a visit to Leh was a "must" and we booked our air passages on one of the thrice weekly flights, deciding to make our two days' return journey by coach along the mountain roads.

Sheikh sahib's office contacted the Leh authorities and arranged that we would be met at the airport and taken to the Tourism bungalow and that a Tourism Officer with a transport should be attached to us to visit all the more important monasteries.

So off we went on August 2nd. The air trip from Srinagar to

Leh is only forty-five minutes but thrilling because of the fantastic panorama of enormous masses of clouds revealed below—blue, white, grey—as the plane flew. Most of the passengers were Westerners with sophisticated cameras and as we drew near to the Leh plain, of which one could catch occasional glimpses between the massed clouds, they all rushed to the plane windows to take their photographs before landing because, as there is a very large Army base and an Air base at Leh, photography is forbidden. This is the highest air strip in the world, so when you land you are literally on top of the world! The Chinese—Tibetan border is only 300 miles away and Army scouts on one side sitting on duty at a height of 14,000–15,000 feet can see their opposite numbers also on duty 100 miles away!

We were being treated as V.I.P's., thanks to *Sheikh sahib*, so we were met by a jeep and a Tourism Officer, Mr. A. Hakim, who took us to the Government Tourism bungalow. We were wearing our thin cotton clothes but found the local Laddakh and Tibetan Buddhist population clad in layers of skirts which looked as if they had never been changed. On the other hand the educated *Laddakhi* girls, many of whom come to Srinagar for higher education or jobs wear a long sleeveless gown over a blouse or jersey.

To our great relief—I a grandmother of seven, Tarfa a seventeen year old—we had no problem of adjustment to the height and started our sight-seeing the same afternoon. However, I was told the following summer by the Chief of the Army Staff of Jammu and Kashmir that we had really gone the wrong way about things because usually tourists make the onward trip from Srinagar by road, so as to gradually become adjusted to the height.

Leh, peaceful and isolated, mountain ringed, a route over the world's highest mountains and the gateway to the Valley, lies in a rocky plain by the turbulent Indus river, which runs through the mountains of Laddakh for 300 miles. It is 434 k.m. from Srinagar and is 11,500 feet above sea level. All around are the barren granite and gravel mountains forming the gigantic snow covered mountain ranges of the Inner Himalayas and the Karakoram. The Indian border with China extends for several hundred miles. The highest road in Laddakh constructed not long ago goes up to Khardun, 5,450 metres, i.e. over 18,356 feet high. It is the highest road in the world.

There is a population of about 100,000 spread out in 250 hamlets and villages scattered over a territory of 100,000 k.m.,

wherever from the awe-inspiring glaciers high up in the mountains rivulets trickle down to water the small patches of land where barley, vegetables and apricots are grown and yaks reared for their milk, butter and wool. The Marka Valley, 12,500 feet high, has more of pasture land for sheep and the cultivation of barley and vegetables. The barley is harvested in August and threshed in September, to the accompaniment of special harvesting songs. From barley a kind of beer called "*chang*" is made, which is drunk by the local population and also sold in Leh to the tourists, carried from the Marka Valley in 5 litre containers.

Laddakh is a very barren land. In order to keep down the population polyandry became the custom of the country. This is confined to brothers, each family having but one wife. If there are more than three brothers those remaining usually enter a monastery and become *lamas*, which is why there are so many monasteries in Laddakh! However, as communications improve and more *Laddakhis* have the chance of coming into the Valley for education and jobs they themselves will tell you that this system is beginning to die out.

We visited Shay Gumpa, about 11 k.m. from Leh. It contained the biggest image of the Buddha in Laddakh, built by a local man, of copper covered with gold leaf. It is 80 feet high and its head is about 8 feet broad.

Shanker Gumpa consists of a large number of buildings and has a colossal image of Chamaik with 11 heads and 1,000 hands. It belongs to the Yellow Hats, named after their headgear, who follow the Dalai Lama. It also contains a representation of a Buddhist goddess with 1,000 arms and legs and 1,000 eyes.

Hemis Gumpa, the oldest and most famous and the wealthiest monastery is about 35 k.m. from Leh. It belongs to the Red Hats, an older Buddhist sect than the Yellow Hats and houses hundreds of *lamas*, a number of whom are novices. It has an annual festival in honour of Padma Sambhawa in June, with a special dance representing the fight of the forces of good and evil. Copies of the masks worn by the *lamas* for this festival are made in the handicrafts centre we visited, where copper work and carpet weaving, embroidery and spinning of *pashm* for the famous Kashmir shawls, painting of religious scrolls are also taught. Some monks of the Red Sect marry. The Yellow Sect are of a much stricter order and more ascetic and learned. They do not marry.

Some families actually dedicate their first born son to this religious life. In that event he is sent to a monastery school, which is residential, from the age of eight years—as pupil, probationer and finally a fully ordained monk. The discipline there especially of the Yellow order is very strict.

Now came our day of departure. We left Leh at 6-30 a.m. by coach on a two days' awe inspiring journey. Until we reached Kargil, 240 miles away, at 6 p.m. we motored mile after mile round and round stark, rocky mountains, relieved occasionally by high up glaciers from which trickled down the life giving water to support small hamlets of people growing vegetables, barley and apricot trees, while far below the turbulent Indus river boiled along and I thought of its long, long journey for hundreds of miles to Sind and the Arabian Sea. When the road seemed particularly precarious I thanked the Almighty that we had a skilful, Sikh driver. He told us that the men of Laddakh are bathed three times only in their lives—when they are born, when they marry and when they die! There is practically no rainfall in this land, in either summer or winter—water mostly comes from the snows.

So far the people of the areas through which we had passed were *Buddhists* but at 6 p.m. we reached Kargil, the capital of Purik, a province in which most of the inhabitants are *Laddakhis* who have become Muslims, *Shias*, who all wear very distinctive turbans.

We left Kargil the next morning at 5 a.m. because at some of the passes the road is so narrow that only one transport can cross and at Drass, one of the highest inhabited places in the world, we had to wait for one hour for a long convoy of army lorries to come through carrying supplies for their army replacement units. All along this route, right up to Sonnmarg, there are army replacement units, which have to be kept supplied for the six months when the road closes for the winter.

Now we were back in civilization, for Sonnmarg is a large tourist centre with restaurants, cafeterias, handicraft shops, etc. Now on we went, a straight route along the Valley, following a trout fishing river past Kulan, Kangan and up to Ganderbal. Here the landscape broadened out and it was a clear run to Srinagar, which we reached at about 4 p.m., thrilled and overcome by what had been for us an unforgettable experience, much of which had been due to the help given by Sheikh Abdullah's administrative staff, especially in Leh.

EID-UL-FITR

The 13th August was to be *Eid-ul-Fitr* and a day before I received a beautifully written *Eid* card from *Sheikh sahib* in the form of a message on the meaning of the Muslim fast. Its English translation reads:

"The fast helps man to purify his thinking. He develops a way of discipline in his life of obedience to God. He directs his feelings towards good behaviour to others and control of his own emotions and desires. In this way the fast is a good thing for mankind. We should not think that fasting is just to deprive ourselves from food and water, it is a training in avoiding all undesirable or ill-doing. Fasting is a complete practice in educating one's thinking and psychology. By doing this man develops a power and spiritual feeling. The people who observe the fast are the blessed ones who develop good character and acquire spiritual exaltation.

"The month of Ramzan brings blessings and the message of disciplined training for Muslims. After Ramzan there comes *Eid-ul-Fitr* and this day is a gift from God for having observed the fast, for those people who observe the fast for the whole month, follow all principles of fasting and obey the laws given to them by God, help others and spend whatever they have for the welfare of others with the idea that they should use it for those to have a share in their wealth.

"When they come for prayers on the day of *Eid* then they express their gratitude to God and utter these words:

God is great, there is no other God but One and He is Great and Supreme and all Praises are for Him.

"They express this in words and in the heart. The essence of *Eid-ul-Fitr* is really for God and what he has given to mankind.

"I wish all of you a happy *Eid* from my heart."

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah."

This was much more appealing than the usual *Eid* greeting, so on my return to Lahore I had the Urdu version framed for my own room.

On the 12th August Tarfa and I, together with a friend, went by car to spend the day at Gulmarg, probably the most favourite mountain resort since many years of the people of this subcontinent. Unlike earlier years when one had to go from Tarnmarg up to Gulmarg by pony there is now a motor road, so we were easily able to first pay a visit to the shrine of the Saint Baba Reshi. He was a disciple of Zain-ud-Din, himself one of the disciples of the Saint, Nur-ud-Din, patron saint of *Kashmiris*, who preached self-abnegation. He retired to live in the village of Ranboh, a few k.m. off the Tarnmarg—Gulmarg road. Devotees who come to the shrine at Ranboh, at the foot of the pine slopes below Gulmarg, to ask a boon of the saint, tie a piece of silk to the railing as a vow to make an offering should their request be granted. I also tied a thread and made my wish, which was later granted, so in 1983 when I again went to Gulmarg I returned to the shrine to make my offering! Childless women tie a ribbon to the latticed window. A large building houses the *Gaddi Nashin Pir* of the shrine and Muslim pilgrims and there is also a separate building to accommodate the large number of Hindu pilgrims who come.

From all the smaller towns and hamlets people were anxious to reach Srinagar to participate in *Eid* prayers in the huge Eidgah. This gathering began as late as 10 a.m. with speeches first on the need for peace and harmony delivered by the heads of the State's two most important rival political organisations of that time, Sheikh Abdullah, Chief Minister and President of the National Conference and Mir Waiz Maulvi Muhammad Farooq, Chairman, Awami Action Committee. Although politically on opposite sides on this day they both spoke in the same strain—about the need for peace and harmony and then the *Eid* prayers began at 11 a.m., led by Sheikh Abdullah.

On the occasion of our first meeting with *Sheikh sahib* when Tarfa and I had arrived from Lahore I had requested him to tape his recollections of his friendship with my husband, since 1925 in Lahore when a student and he said he would talk about him and Kashmir. I sent my tape recorder to him so that he could do the recording at his leisure. I reminded Om Parkash several times but the answer was always "He hasn't done it yet". Then on the morning before we were to leave, i.e. the 14th, the tape recorder was returned just as it had gone.

The 14th was our last day before we were to leave by plane for Amritsar to cross the Attari/Wagah border for Lahore and it was also the evening when we had been invited to the Chief Minister's house for the family *Eid* dinner party. I said to *Sheikh sahib* when I met

him that I felt very disappointed that he hadn't kept his promise. He just smiled and said:

"Don't worry, there is still time."

We had a typical *Kashmiri* feast where we all sat down, two to a large dish or "*trane*" and ate with our fingers. There were so many nieces, nephews, grandchildren, daughters, besides *Begumsahiba* herself that I really lost count of who was who and was only aware that all were good looking and charming. Tarfa was very popular with the younger group who had many questions to ask about life in Pakistan and of course fashions, as not many young people have the opportunity to visit there. We also heard a great deal of praise about Pakistan's TV plays, which Srinagar watches from Peshawar and Rawalpindi TV stations.

At last we all rose to leave. As Tarfa and I were going off to our hotel room only 200 yards away *Sheikh sahib* asked us to wait. When the last guest had left he escorted us to the hotel, sat down in our one armchair and said:

"Bring out your tape recorder."

KASHMIR PROBLEM IN UNITED NATIONS, 1948

We were unprepared—the cord was short, we had no suitable table and *Sheikh sahib* was too far away from the recorder but somehow we managed. He recorded the two meetings he had with my husband over the Kashmir question, one in Srinagar in October, 1947 and one in New York in a hotel in January, 1948 along with Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, his old class-fellow from Islamia College, Lahore and later Secretary-General, Government of Pakistan. His voice was very soft, but it was obvious that he had mentally prepared beforehand what he wanted to say for he recorded his statement without any pause for reflection. He recorded in Urdu and I later got the English translation done and *Sheikh sahib's* permission in writing to use the recording, of which I sent him a copy. He said:

"I got to know Dr. Taseer really well in October, 1947 when he was sent to Srinagar by the representatives of the newly formed Pakistan Government then present in Lahore to persuade me to bring Kashmir into Pakistan. I had known him beforehand of course when he was Principal, first of Sri Partap College and

then Amar Singh College, Srinagar, in 1941–43, where he performed his duties most excellently. I also knew him in earlier years when I was studying in Lahore at Islamia College from 1925 for two years, during which time I used to meet him occasionally at the houses of mutual acquaintances.

“When Taseer came to Srinagar in that October of 1947 I had a detailed discussion with him, but nothing positive came of it. Political conditions were very bad at that time and the whole of the Punjab was on fire, so I felt I had to be very careful about taking any decision concerning Kashmir. I told Taseer that if Kashmir were to decide to opt for Pakistan at this time the same thing will happen to us as happened to Kapurthala. I told him I had decided to keep my options until conditions had quietened down in the Punjab. I also believed that any decision made had to be that of the *Kashmiri* people themselves, i.e. as regards joining Pakistan, because not merely those of the present generation would be affected by such a decision but also the generations to follow. I wanted time because of this and I thought a decision should also not be made immediately in view of the prevailing conditions. Taseer was very impatient about my making up my mind there and then, that is why our discussion could not be conclusive.

“Then Taseer said:

‘If you will not join us now of your own free-will then we will have to think of other ways.’

“I told Taseer—

‘If you think of other ways it will not be a good thing because we in Kashmir have already decided that we will not let anyone play with our destiny. A decision must be made by the people themselves and they must be allowed to make it.’

“That was one meeting with Taseer. After that things changed radically and then the Kashmir problem became an international one and was taken to the United Nations Security Council, starting from January 15th, 1948. At the United Nations meetings at Lake Success Taseer was part of the Pakistan delegation as an adviser and acting as Secretary to Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, President of Azad Kashmir from

October 24th, 1947. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, then Secretary-General, Government of Pakistan, with whom I had studied in Lahore two decades earlier, was a member of the Pakistan delegation. He, Taseer and I held a private meeting in a New York hotel. Both Muhammad Ali and Taseer asked me what could now be the solution of the Kashmir problem. I said:

“It has now become a very complicated matter and if you believe that Britain and the U.S.A. are going to get Kashmir for you rest assured that this is not going to happen. I reminded them that India is a very large country, that both Britain and the U.S.A. need trade relations with her and at present Pakistan does not have the necessary military might to take any stand.

“I added that in my opinion the only way was for India and Pakistan to meet together for discussions and find a solution which would suit both sides. The two asked me what such a solution could be and I replied—

‘Only this, that Kashmir should be an independent state, free from both India and Pakistan. This should be a solution which should be acceptable to all, a face saving solution. Afterwards, if Kashmir has become an independent state it will naturally be closer to Pakistan, firstly because of a common religion and secondly because Lahore is near and Delhi is far off. Such a solution cannot be harmful to Pakistan.’

“Muhammad Ali replied that this solution would not be acceptable to Pakistan because India is a strong and powerful country and will hatch all sorts of plots against us. I emphasised:

‘You should put some trust in the *Kashmiris*, they will not join in conspiracies against Pakistan and be bought over.’

“I told both of them that the time will come when you will have to admit that Kashmir should be an independent country but by that time it will not be possible. If you leave this problem hanging fire now you will be the losers.

“That was my second meeting with Taseer over the Kashmir question. Taseer himself came from a *Kashmiri* family and had a great love for Kashmir. Therefore, he wanted that this issue

should be settled amicably as soon as possible, but he did not succeed at that time. The matter was still hanging fire when he died in November, 1950."

It is also worth noting that Sheikh Abdullah was forbidden by the Indian delegation to meet alone with Security Council members, but Sardar Ibrahim Khan told me at a later date when I met him in Islamabad that *Sheikh sahib's* men used to meet Dr. Taseer each evening to report on the day's proceedings.

According to Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, in January, 1948 in the Security Council of the U.N.O. the Indian Government contended that the State of Jammu and Kashmir had legally and constitutionally acceded to India as not only the ruler but also Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the popular party had signed the Instrument of Accession.⁶

But this latter statement was emphatically denied by both Allah Rakhar Saghar and Qayyum Qureshi, son of Abdul Majeed Qureshi, both Jammu political associates of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan, when I met them in Rawalpindi in January, 1985.

Sheikh Anwar-ul-Haq, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Pakistan, who was District Magistrate, Rawalpindi in October, 1947, accompanied my husband, on 1st October, 1947 to Srinagar, when the latter was deputed by the Pakistan Government to go for discussions with Sheikh Abdullah after the latter's release from jail on September 29th.

Others who came from Lahore at the same time in the hope of persuading Sheikh Abdullah to come to a decision about the future of Kashmir were some old friends and co-workers of his—Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Sheikh Hissamuddin of the Ahrar movement, Sadiq Ali, Journalist, Malik Tajuddin of the Press Trust, Sadiq Hassan from Amritsar (a *Kashmiri* family). Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din also met Sheikh Abdullah on 8th September in Badamibagh Cantonment as reported to me by Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Jeweller, an old friend of *Sheikh sahib's* in an interview with me in August, 1983, in Srinagar, for he had kept a diary of that period.

When Justice Anwar-ul-Haq and Dr. Taseer returned to Lahore on October 3rd they brought Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, a member of the National Conference Working Committee (who later became

Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir) along with them as Sheikh Abdullah's emissary for discussions. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, another member of the National Congress Working Committee who joined the negotiations, was already in Lahore. I learnt from Malik Wazir Ali, who was at that time private secretary to Liaquat Ali Khan that Sadiq was allowed to see only him, Quaid-i-Azam having reputedly said:

"I do not know this man",

and that when Sadiq came out of Liaquat Ali Khan's Office he reported to Malik Wazir Ali that the former had told him:

"Quaid-i-Azam is not willing to meet Sheikh Abdullah, he is not willing to negotiate any terms—he insists that Kashmir should join Pakistan unconditionally."

It was also reported at that time that one special condition brought by G. M. Sadiq from Sheikh Abdullah (in addition to the usual ones relating to foreign affairs, defence, finance, etc.) for his State's joining Pakistan was that no non-State subject should be allowed to purchase property in Kashmir, as had been the case in the State Subject Law of Maharaja Hari Singh. One can accept that this could have been so, for Mr. Habib Kaifi of Pakistan Writers' Guild, Lahore, born in Jammu of a businessman family and at one time Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, who was in Srinagar until October, 1948, told me when I met him in the winter of 1982 in Lahore, that sometime before Jammu and Kashmir's Instrument of Accession to India was actually signed on 26.10.47, people in Pakistan, mostly of the feudal landlord class, were already making enquiries about the possibility of buying up property in Kashmir, for at that time people still assumed that Kashmir would join Pakistan and that, therefore, the laws of the *Maharaja's* State might not continue to operate.

Through G. M. Sadiq, while he was still in Lahore, the message was sent for the Muslim League that they should declare that the future of the States will be decided by the people and not by the Princes, i.e. not by the *Maharajas* and *Nawabs*, but by the people. This message was conveyed from Sheikh Abdullah in July when he was still in Rambagh Fort to G. M. Sadiq and from him to Faiz Ahmed Faiz in Lahore.

In an interview I had with G. M. Sadiq's sister, Zenub (a member) of the State Congress (I) Party, in Srinagar on August 26th, 1983, she told me that a copy of the Manifesto for the New Kashmir as approved by the National Conference and printed in 1944 was sent with her brother by Sheikh Abdullah, to show the basis on which they wanted to administer Jammu and Kashmir State if they joined Pakistan.

Sadiq's sister also said that in his meeting with Liaquat Ali Khan the latter had said:

"You and I alone cannot take a decision, you must bring all the Working Committee of your National Conference to Lahore for discussions on how to plan the administration of your State on the basis of your New Kashmir programme in the possible event of a merger."

But his Lahore friends advised him against this step, thinking it inadvisable that the whole of the Working Committee should be out of Kashmir at such a crucial time!

So it happened that Sadiq's mission could not be fulfilled.

Sadiq left Lahore disillusioned and from there went to Delhi, where he was to meet Sheikh Abdullah, who arrived there from Srinagar on October 20th ("Pakistan Times", 23.10.47) accompanied by Durga Parshad Dhar, who later became a Deputy Minister in the Jammu and Kashmir administration and Ghulam Mohiuddin Kara and did not go on to Karachi for further talks with the Pakistan Government as he had previously planned, according to the Pakistan press of that period. Everything was in turmoil, no one knew what was going to happen and just at that time the tribesmen sent from Pakistan without Sheikh Abdullah's knowledge, had also reached first Baramulla and then Srinagar, so he felt betrayed and the course of Kashmir's future history was shaped.

* * * * *

I thanked *Sheikh sahib* very sincerely for the trouble he had taken in coming personally to make the tape recording about the meetings with my husband in October, 1947 and January, 1948. He did his best to persuade Tarfa and me to come again to Kashmir in the winter for winter sports in Gulmarg, but much as I love Gulmarg

I regretfully declined on the ground that I was now the wrong age group for such activities!

The following morning quite early, from the verandah outside our hotel room we watched a demonstration of about two hundred women, half of them in *burqas*, who gathered outside the office and residence of the Chief Minister, shouting slogans, "*Sher-i-Kashmir, Waada Pura Karo*". Representatives from the Chief Minister's office came in and out to discuss their demands with them and finally a deputation from amongst them was taken inside. They stayed there sitting and standing on the grass for about two hours, quite at their ease. We felt so happy to see that these women knew they had a right to demonstrate—truly an egalitarian society.

Just then a huge bouquet of the finest flowers in *Sheikh sahib's* garden arrived at our room. We were overwhelmed both by his thoughtfulness and by what to do with a three feet tall bouquet. We couldn't leave it in our room, we couldn't throw it away—he would get to know! While we were debating the problem *Sheikh sahib* himself came to see what arrangements we had made for getting to the airport. When he saw the amount of luggage Tarfa had accumulated—so many presents for family and friends—on this first visit, he said he would send his car and driver to take us to the airport. Actually he was also being careful for us because we were from Pakistan and also a few days earlier there had been an encounter between Indian army, police and public in which one or two people had been killed.

Sheikh sahib had great love for flowers. He had imported improved varieties of flowers suited to the climate of Kashmir from various countries for planting in the flower beds of the Moghul gardens around Srinagar and he used to distribute such seeds to his friends who were interested in gardening as a hobby.

Everyone who commented on Sheikh Abdullah's hobbies mentioned his great passion for gardens and flowers. In actual fact one should admit that besides flowers he loved all living things—his fellow-men—children—growing students who were, he said the future of the country—the animals in Dachigam wild animal sanctuary—pet pigeons—the ever-present flower buttonhole in his coat lapel or *kurta*—his pet dog, Moti. Poor Moti—all his spirit went with the passing away of *Sheikh sahib* for he had been used to lying by his side day and night when he was at home. In Srinagar when

I was there in the summer of 1983 for the first death anniversary functions *Sheikh sahib's* room was opened and Moti went hopefully to look inside it and found it empty. Then for the rest of the day he lay across the threshold of the entrance door to the house, refusing to move or to eat except to lie by my chair in the garden, for he had been used to seeing me in the garden in the previous two years with *Sheikh sahib* and his family members.

On the occasion of his death anniversary on September 8th, 1983, from the 7th onwards for three days his grave near Hazrat Bal was heaped with the huge blossoms from the Moghul gardens. On the occasion of his granddaughter's marriage at the end of September, 1983 (the daughter of G. M. Shah) the car in which she left her parental home for that of her bridegroom was covered with a magnificent "*chaddar*" of closely woven blossoms plucked from those same gardens instead of the usual tinsel decorations.

* * * * *

This is how Tarfa Niazi, my young student friend, saw Sheikh Abdullah at our first visit in 1980. At that time she was a seventeen years' old student of Architecture at the National College of Arts, Lahore.

"It was just our second day in Srinagar and already we had been given an appointment with *Sheikh sahib*. I knew that he was an old friend of the late Dr. Taseer and that we would be given some privilege in being able to see him soon, but so soon I had not even imagined. Later I was to become acquainted with his generosity and concern for his friends all the time. Being with him one never realised his stature but of course his concern for his people and their progress was an integral part of his life or I would rather say, that was his life.

"I was naturally very excited and a little nervous about the forthcoming visit to such a great leader. We walked down from our hotel to his office in the morning and were taken in. There were many people in the office, apparently from various walks of life. I was told that anyone who wanted to see *Sheikh sahib* or *Begumsahiba* had just to come to the office and ask. I was surprised to see that such people did actually manage to see him.

"We walked inside and out to the lawn—it was so beautiful with roses in full bloom. A little to one side there was another group of chairs. Here there was an old white haired man sitting with a bouquet of flowers. *Sheikh sahib* came out, he was an impressive man. I had seen the life style of ministers in Pakistan and their sumptuous pattern of living so I found his life style so simple.

"We met him feeling slightly awed and impressed, but he greeted Auntie Chris so warmly as if it had been a two days' period instead of thirty-three years since they had last met. I was soon at ease and found myself talking very freely. When the old man came forward to give his bouquet *Sheikh sahib* was so patient with him and gave him his full attention. That was it—when you were with *Sheikh sahib* you were sure to receive his undivided attention, no matter what! Anybody after having talked to him would feel as if he had really been heard.

"At one meeting with *Sheikh sahib* when he had an old *Parsi* friend with him they had said something negative about Pakistan and I replied that it was incorrect, that I would read up that particular fact about the history of my country to support my answer and then let them know.

"I was to be surprised at the extent of hospitality shown to us by *Sheikh sahib* throughout our stay. He would constantly enquire about us and whenever there was anything we required it was taken care of. Imagine a man of his position sparing so much time for us!

"The tourism was so well organised and *Sheikh sahib's* personality was such, despite any small weaknesses he might have, that wherever we went, because people knew that we were friends of his that made them take more care of us. We could see and feel that among the general public.

"The evening before we left, *Sheikh sahib* came specially to our hotel to say good-bye and also to record some of his memories about Dr. Taseer, since Auntie Chris had asked him. It was, I think, very considerate of him to come all the way, he could have just called us to his house. But he was like that—unaffected by his high position, a man without any ostentation."

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KASHMIR REVISITED 1981

Tarfa Niazi had enjoyed our 1980 summer trip to the Valley so much that in 1981 her younger sister, Faryah and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Shahnawaz Khan Niazi, also decided that we should make one party for another visit. So in June, 1981 we all crossed the Wagah border and caught the midday Delhi/Srinagar flight which stops at Amritsar to take on passengers.

The day after our arrival we went to call formally on Sheikh Abdullah and *Begumsahiba* in the evening and had tea with them in the garden. *Sheikh sahib* had several group photographs taken of us all sitting together, of which we were later given copies.

I had brought with me an historic photograph of the early twenties for *Sheikh sahib's* interest of a *mushaira* in Simla presided over by Sir Abdul Qadir, in which his great friend, Hafeez Jullundhri, my own husband, Pandit Hari Chand Akhtar and Abid Ali Abid, amongst others, participated. My husband was an M.A. student at that time and it was his first *mushaira*. Being at that time mentally absorbed in getting together sources of material for his own memoirs then in preparation, *Sheikh sahib's* first reaction was:

"But I am not in this picture."

I replied:

"*Sheikh sahib*, you are a great leader and you are Sher-i-Kashmir, but you aren't a poet so how could you be in this picture? This is a momento for you of your old friends participating in a *mushaira*."

The others gaped and said:

"How could you?"

But I insisted I had said nothing out of the ordinary. *Sheikh sahib* was Chief Minister and Sher-i-Kashmir, but in the early twenties

he hadn't even arrived in Lahore as a student to form his friendships with some of the people in this photograph, who were all a little older than he.

Sheikh sahib now asked us what were our programmes for this holiday. We listed the trips we had planned and then I requested:

"Please, *Sheikh sahib*, invite us all to Dachigam Reserve as you did last year for Tarfa and me."

"Yes, of course" he agreed. "I'll let you know the date."

"And please give us trout again from the Dachigam hatcheries."

To Om Parkash:

"Write it down and try Tarnmarg for strawberries. They may still be in season."

And then I remembered that after his release from jail and he came to Pakistan in May, 1964 he brought a present of Kashmir strawberries for General Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan.

On the appointed morning, June 28th, Om Parkash arrived with a car to take us all to Dachigam Reserve. *Sheikh sahib*, accompanied by *Begumsahiba* and Om Parkash had gone to Jammu the previous day to hold a District Board meeting of officials and M.L.As. as he was doing each week, district by district. On the way to Dachigam we were taken to see Pari Mahal, high upon the side of the mountain Zabarwon, a few miles outside Srinagar, near Chashma-i-Shahi, with a fantastic view over the Dal Lake. From a tumbledown monument with an old observatory it has now been renovated into a beautiful tourist attraction, a series of graduated lawns and gardens in six terraces, leading right up to the top, from which we took our photographs across the Lake. I remembered that the geologists have a theory that centuries ago the Kashmir Valley was once a lake which dried up when nature afforded an outlet at Baramulla and the river Jhelum.

Some say Pari Mahal was built by the *Sufi Muhammadans* for astronomical or astrological purposes about A.D. 1650. There is a water reservoir built against the hillside and a "*baradari*" facing the Lake. According to a *Kashmiri* lexicon published from Srinagar

this building is also called Koontillum and the Hindus claim that the building existed even before the advent of Muslim rule and was later on modified to suit the astronomical pursuits of Prince Dara Shikuh. It is also said that this prince built Pari Mahal for his preceptor, Mulla Shah.

At Dachigam "mini-palace" as I call it we found, besides *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba*, their adopted nephew, Sheikh Nazir and the younger son, Dr. Mustafa, whose passion apart from his service at Tarnmarg hospital, was hunting and fishing.

After a happy, relaxed family lunch *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba* retired to rest because of the long journey they had had from Jammu, with the stipulation that we should all collect on the lawn for *Kashmiri* salted tea and *kulchas* at 5 p.m. Dr. Mustafa and Sheikh Nazir had plans for trout fishing in the nearby stream. They looked at me and one said:

"I suppose you also would like to rest?"

I replied indignantly:

"Not at all. I can rest throughout eternity but I'll never again have this chance of watching trout fishing so if you don't mind I'll accompany you all and watch you catch your fish."

While we were having tea on the lawn with *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba*, in the course of conversation I brought up a topic which really interested me. I had recently been presented with an English translation of a book written by a German and published in London, "*Jesus Died in Kashmir*" by A. Faber-Kaiser, in which he puts forward the theory that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross but he was only in a coma when he was taken down at sunset and that once his crucifixion wounds had healed he departed on the long trek to Kashmir through India in search of the lost tribes of Israel, accompanied by his mother, Mary and a disciple, Thomas. He gives plenty of references from books and travellers' diaries to support his theory. Legend says Mary died on the way and was buried at 'Pindi Point, Murree (where there is a grave of direction East/West, supposedly hers) and Thomas died later on in Madras (where he went after the death of Jesus) originally known as Mylapur, South India and was, it is said, murdered by *Brahmins*. Before he reached Madras he is said to have stayed at Kerala where his mission was to promote

Christianity. He is supposed to have built a church in Kerala of which Christians recently claimed they had found a centuries' old cross, part of this church, on a plantation, ("Pakistan Times", Lahore, 6-6-83).

Jesus' body is said to lie in the crypt of the "Rozabal" in the Khanayar district of Srinagar, which I had already visited, also buried East/West, under the name of Yuz Asaf. It is said that Thomas buried him before leaving for Madras. In the same enclosure is the grave of Syed Nasir-ud-Din, a Muslim saint of the 15th century, buried in North/South direction. According to this book he was buried here at his own request.

This book mentioned the name of Sahibzada Basharat Saleem, who lived in Rajbagh near to the Nedous Hotel where we were staying and who claimed to be a direct descendent of Jesus Christ or Yuz Asaf, and was said to have a geneological table to this effect. His father and grandfather were also reputed to have had the gift of curing by the "laying on of hands", as did Jesus. I said I would be very interested to meet this Mr. Basharat. All the company sitting there, including *Sheikh sahib*, looked amused and nephew Nazir said:

"If you are really interested I will send him to you."

I also related how the book described that Yuz Asaf had married a woman, Marjan from one of the villages in the Valley of Yusmarg and bore his children and that he died at a ripe old age, 120 years. To this *Sheikh sahib* commented in a soft voice:

"He did not marry her."

Now we said our goodbyes and thanks to *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba* for a wonderful day and returned to Srinagar.

Sure enough the very next evening this gentleman, Sahibzada Basharat Saleem turned up to meet me at the hotel. He told me that his father had been a friend of my husband when the latter was Principal of Amar Singh College and that was how he had first seen him. He also gave me his life history (he was an M.A., LL.B. from Punjab University) and he said he had sacrificed his career when he was in a Government post in Srinagar by participating in political demonstrations and going to jail along with Sheikh Abdullah. He gave me his photo and bio-data from "Asian Who's Who".

Then he began to bitterly criticise Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg and other political colleagues of *Sheikh sahib* because he thought he had not received sufficient recognition for his record of work with them. He muttered:

"At this time Afzal Beg is on his sick bed and I will see to it that he does not rise from it again. And as for Sheikh Abdullah!"

My heart went cold. However, two days later our group went on a day excursion to a beauty spot and as our coach was re-entering Srinagar in the evening we noticed that at the Polo Ground, wooden stands were being dismantled for what must have been a public meeting. I asked our tourist guide what was the occasion and he replied that Afzal Beg had held a meeting there. So much for Mr. Basharat's predictions!

During our meeting I told him I had a recent news item from "*Khaleej Times*" of Dubai of how a team of American scientists were hoping to investigate the stains on the famous "*Turin Shroud*", belonging to the former Italian Royal Family (the Savoy) in which the body of Jesus is reputed to have been wrapped when taken down from the cross, to see if the stains on it were really those of human blood. Mr. Basharat Saleem said:

"First they should take a sample of my blood to see if we are the same blood group!"

Then I asked about his religion and all he would say was:

"Heaven is peace of mind, but when one's life is miserable, that is hell."

So frankly I lost interest in Mr. Basharat Saleem, but I remembered to thank nephew Sheikh Nazir for having arranged the meeting!

I took a short walk through the pine woods and then came back to the Tourism bungalow, carrying my copy of '*Jesus Died in Kashmir*'. There was a photograph in the book of two so-called '*Beni Israel*', what the author had called '*the Jews of the Yusmarg*' and I looked at them and then looked at the *chaukidar* who had served me with coffee and was puzzled by the resemblance. I sat down by the Tourism Officer for Yusmarg, showed him the book and photograph and asked if he thought there was any substance in

this legend. He furiously exclaimed that the two shown in the photograph were his own *chaukidars* now before me, very pious Muslims, Sufi Kamal Awani and Sheikh Ahmed and how dare that man insult their religion so! He took down the name of the book, author and publisher and said he would write a complaint to his Director of Tourism in Srinagar"!

In a meeting in the summer of 1983 Mr. Basharat Saleem told me that there was a great deal of interest in Europe and U.S.A. regarding this legend of Yuz Asaf and daily he received a sackful of mail from all parts of the world. He had also been invited to a Conference in Italy on the subject of the Turin Shroud, with all expenses paid so I advised him to go and put Kashmir on the world map! In August of the same year a Srinagar newspaper also reported that large numbers of Western tourists had begun to visit this shrine to an extent that it was difficult for the shrine attendants to deal with them.

Next day at the beautiful Manisbal Lake, covered with pink lotus blossoms and the haunt of aquatic birds, we were just climbing into a *shikara* to cross to the other side to see the ruins of the old Moghul garden built by Empress Noor Jehan, known as Garoka (the bay window) when a crowd of enthusiastic schoolgirls rushed up to us—"You are from Pakistan, aren't you? they cried.

"From what town—Rawalpindi, Lahore?"

When we replied "Lahore" one of the prettiest came to the forefront,—

"Please, please take my photo. I have an aunt in Samanabad, Lahore. Please send her my photo and tell her you have met me."

So we took a photo of her with her lively class-fellows, dressed just like *Pakistani* schoolgirls.

Where his politics were concerned Sheikh Abdullah was utterly uncompromising, he would not deviate even for a great friend and indeed had to part from many great friends because of his unchanging stand, even though he always retained his affection for them. He had known my husband since 1925 and had kept in touch with him until 1948 and spoke of him as a great lover of Kashmir. When I

wrote asking him to write down for me his memories of Taseer as a friend he first wrote to me on 2-1-81 agreeing:—

"The contribution of the late Dr. Taseer when he headed the only institution of higher education in the whole Valley will certainly be long remembered by all of us. It will, therefore, be my pleasure to give my own impressions about him with special reference to Kashmir."

In the summer of 1981 in Srinagar I reminded him of his promise but when we met at dinner in his home he told me he had changed his mind and couldn't do what I had asked as he and my husband had certain basic differences where politics were concerned. I replied that this didn't matter:

"Just write whatever you feel."

The answer was still "No".

In contrast in reply to the letter I had written to Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, the well-known novelist and my husband's old friend from the London days of 1934–36 from Srinagar requesting an interview about his remembrances of my husband, he had replied from Bombay on 26-6-81:

"I do wish very much to record my nostalgia for the days of our shared love and companionship in the creative work we did right from London onwards. I vividly remember each day of my stay with you in Srinagar and the inspiration that Taseer gave me."

* * * * *

Mr. Shahnawaz Khan Niazi is a farmer of Sargodha and Mianwali districts of the Punjab, from a large feudal family of several generations of farming, a family which had played an active role in the administration of the Punjab for the last four centuries. After this second visit of his to the Valley in 1982 Mr. Shahnawaz Khan Niazi was kind enough to give me a summing up of his impressions of Sheikh Abdullah formed in short meetings with him during these two visits.

"In discussions with Sheikh Abdullah in the summers of 1981 and 1982 while on my visits to the Valley my firm feeling was

that he was above all a staunch *Kashmiri* nationalist, whose ideal from the beginning had been to have a totally independent Kashmir and then establish a good relationship with the newly created Pakistan, which would be best suited for Kashmir's development and welfare. I gathered then that as circumstances had developed from 1944 onwards, he had wanted to have a closer understanding with the Muslims of India after it became evident that Pakistan would be created and he had tried to establish a dialogue with Mr. Jinnah from 1944 onwards. His view was that he was willing to co-operate in the larger interests of the Muslims but would want to retain the identity of the Kashmir Muslims as a separate group or area. But unfortunately there had been a definite misunderstanding between him and Mr. Jinnah in 1944 during the latter's visit to Kashmir on the ground of Mr. Jinnah's insistence that the National Conference should work under the aegis of the Muslim League and not maintain its own identity. Both leaders were of very rigid and strong personality so the dialogue made no headway. Things came to such a pass that they never met again.

"I asked Sheikh Abdullah about Jinnah's statement in 1947 that 'Kashmir is a ripe fruit which will fall into my lap' and he replied that given the geographical situation of Kashmir, the cultural pattern, the religion, the economic ties, this was a shrewd observation. He himself did not have much choice other than to try to come to an understanding with Pakistan. He himself realised that the best way out for him was to co-operate with Pakistan but in the process not lose either his identity as a leader of the *Kashmiris* nor make the *Kashmiris* lose their identity as *Kashmiris* and become a part of the vast Muslim mass.

"Sheikh Abdullah had made overtures towards the Muslim League when he knew Pakistan was going to come into existence, but unfortunately he was given no opportunity to come to an understanding. The feeling I received was that he was thinking in terms of a confederation agreement with Pakistan and an international agreement with India.

"The impression Sheikh Abdullah gave me was that separate statements had appeared from various quarters that once Kashmir was taken over, through this action he would be lynched. This made him lose confidence in the leadership of

Pakistan, keeping in view particularly the background of his unsuccessful efforts with Mr. Jinnah in 1944. So now the only option for him, being a person of a secular point of view and with his understanding of the promises which had been given to him by the Congress Party, was that he would probably be better off with their kind of leadership and receive a better deal for his *Kashmiris*, which was his primary aim and so he moved towards co-operation with India.

"Sheikh Abdullah was a total idealist and his only interest was the best deal he could get for Kashmir and his *Kashmiris*. His often repeated statement to me was that destiny had played an important role, that circumstances were such that they did not permit him to come to an understanding with Pakistan. Every small opportunity he got to prove a point or establish the separate identity of the *Kashmiris* he took. The bill on Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Permit for Resettlement in (or permanent return to) Jammu and Kashmir State, was just such a case to prove that he wanted to make a stand for the *Kashmiri* nation, for the bill as such did not involve more than a small percentage of the population.

"He died with his idealism. He lived with his vision of the *Kashmiri* nation and its welfare and with that ideal in view he continued to battle in a head on clash with the Congress right up to his last days, which is ample proof of his being true to his idealism. This also shows that he was not a lackey of the Congress.

"Until his dying days Sheikh Abdullah could not lose the identity of being a *Kashmiri* Muslim. Under the existing circumstances he lived up to his ideals to the best possible maximum. In Dachigam hunting lodge, where he had invited my family and me to lunch in June, 1981 he stated firmly to me that he could never be subservient to the Congress. Because he had never accepted the domination of the Dogras, in the same way he would never accept the domination of the Congress. He used the same words in a public meeting the next day in Srinagar, June 29th.

"I did not accept the domination of the Dogras and I will not accept the domination of the Congress."

"That is his record from 1931—82. He died an unhappy man because he felt his mission was not completed but considering the circumstances he did everything possible, for example the *Kashmiris* still have a separate identity. He was able to create a separate *Kashmiri* identity within the federation of India. He has developed his state into a society where women play their part equally with men. In Kashmir one gets the feeling that it is a Muslim country, not the impression one receives in the rest of the Indian Union. The general feeling one gets is that it is a democratic Muslim country in which Islam is practised in a healthy atmosphere. Mosques are always full on Fridays, women also are able to worship inside mosques, full respect is given to the month of Ramzan and all the Muslim festivals are observed. The State is no doubt a secular one but the impact of the majority Muslim population is truly felt."

VISIT TO JAMMU, 1981

In November, 1981 I went *via* Amritsar to Jammu for two days by a bus which had three breakdowns on the way, to enquire about a possible *Pakistani* edition of Sheikh Abdullah's Memoirs, on behalf of a Lahore publisher who had heard he was preparing them.

He admitted with a whimsical smile when I met him:

"Yes, that's so, people have written whatever they wanted to about me for so many years; now I want to have my say. The book, in both Urdu and English, will soon be ready. I am dictating in Urdu but I need Farooq here to help me," (his eldest son, at that time a member of Lok Sabha and was in Delhi).

I informed *Sheikh sahib* that the Lahore publisher was prepared to make a formal agreement now by which he would earn royalties on Pakistan editions of his memoirs; otherwise someone might bring copies from Delhi and pirate both editions of the book in Pakistan, so why shouldn't he earn something from his work?

"You know, all my life I have never been able to earn", he said "and now I have no incentive. Besides there are laws against pirating of books."

I'm afraid I gave a very sarcastic rejoinder to that. I also thought that some might remark cynically that at least in the early stages of his life as a leader he had no need to earn for, as in other political movements, people literally threw money and jewellery at him for his political work.

Before I arrived in Jammu the family with whom I was to stay had already received a message that I was expected to dinner with *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba* that same evening in the Chief Minister's House. At dinner I asked *Begumsahiba* if we were to have salted tea afterwards, but she said:

"No, after dinner we always have green tea,"

and we did.

We discussed Pakistan TV dramas, especially those dealing with social problems, which Srinagar people watch from our Peshawar and Rawalpindi stations, Chandigarh and Amritsar people from Lahore TV station. They are all very enthusiastic about the quality of acting and the good looks of our actors and actresses. *Begumsahiba* sighed and said:

"I don't often have a chance to watch them as *Sheikh sahib* doesn't enjoy them."

He scowled and remarked:

"No, they are a waste of time"

and switched on the portable radio lying beside his plate in time to tune in to All India News bulletin.

The next morning, while I was out visiting the temples, again came a telephone call from Om Parkash Gupta, *Sheikh sahib's* secretary, that *Sheikh sahib* was expecting me at 6 p.m. My hostess was intrigued:

"6 p.m. is a very odd time. Does it mean that you are staying on for dinner?"

"I'll know when I reach there"

was my reply.

Now comes yet another reason why, in spite of his stature as a great politician I think of *Sheikh sahib* as a simple, lovable person with his family and friends, always such simplicity in living and affection for people in small things, always in tune with them. It seems his wife was expecting some women guests from Srinagar and was having salted tea prepared for them, so he had called me for an hour before his evening prayers just so that I also could sit, chat with him and have the salted tea which was not served the previous evening and of which he knew I was very fond. And he even asked me anxiously if it was good!

Later on I remarked that he was looking better in health than in the summer when I had met him (which happened to be only one month before he had handed over the Presidentship of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference to his son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, mentioning his age and indifferent health in his speech). A shadow crossed his face and I thought he was beginning to look a little frail, but he replied that he was quite well except for a touch of bronchitis which did not leave him. I remonstrated with him for having eaten so much rice at dinner the previous evening, which was not good for him if he had bronchitis (I already knew he was also a diabetic of some years' standing). My spontaneous remark was, I guess, a hangover from my own school days also spent in a cold climate, when we were taught that rice is not given to a person with any chest trouble. To this he quipped:

"Well, it isn't every evening that you come to dinner is it and to ask a *Kashmiri* not to eat rice is to ask him to die!"

I could not go along with this and said so and pointed out that his religion enjoined a sense of discipline in eating as well as in other habits so that it should not be difficult for a practising Muslim such as he to exercise restraint in the kind of diet he took.

"What has religion got to do with exercising discipline in diet when it is necessary for health reasons?"

he demanded.

"Tell me."

And of course I couldn't. Actually there had been a press item at the end of September that he was ill and I had written a letter to him to ask that someone from his family should inform me about his health and he himself sent a letter in reply on 31-10-1981:

"I was not ill but had actually sprained my knee and then there was also a slight touch of arthritis. These minor ailments are part of life and do not deter me from discharging my responsibilities and duties. Though the knee did give me some pain I continued to attend my usual chores."

As he was working on his Memoirs he now became reminiscent about his achievements over the past fifty years:

"I haven't accomplished as much as I would have liked, but I have done my best. The trouble is people don't work any more",

he said broodingly, shaking his head as he moved about restlessly.

While discussing his Memoirs he added that more photographs and news items of the struggles of the early thirties were needed. We talked of possible sources and then I suggested Prem Nath Bazaz, a *Kashmiri Pandit* ardent freedom fighter who had worked in earlier times, for about sixteen years with *Sheikh sahib* until their differences made them part company and who had been imprisoned by both the State and Indian Governments. *Sheikh sahib* said:

"Oh he, he will never give any help."

I said:

"No, for I wrote to him not so long ago at his Delhi address referring to the time before 1947 when he edited the *Kashmiri* newspaper "*Hamdard*" at the time when my husband was also Principal of Amar Singh College. I wrote to ask if he would know of any journals to which my husband might have contributed at that time and he replied that he had been jailed for some periods and at those times his house was twice searched and papers and documents destroyed."

Sheikh sahib laughed:

"Did he really write that?"

I added:

"And further from the books he has written on Kashmir and especially his last one, "*Democracy Through Intimidation And Terror*", on the period of the 1977 Janata struggle during the State Elections, he has referred to you in such an insulting and disparaging manner, even calling the heart attack you had at that time under the pressure of the Election campaign, simulated, that I would say he is a very vicious man."

There was a thoughtful silence and then *Sheikh sahib* agreed:

"Yes, he is a vicious man."

In his book on the life and work of his father, Prem Nath Bazaz, his son Nagin Bazaz says:

"It was nice to meet *Sheikh sahib* in July 1981 in his garden in Srinagar. This time I was ready to listen and understand his point of view. *Sheikh sahib* was bitter about what father said about him when he became the sole owner—editor of "*Hamdard*" and some of the books he wrote when he was exiled in Delhi after three years' detention. The old man was furious about what father said and wrote during and after the (1977) Elections."¹

We also discussed possible sources of additional material for his Memoirs and for the History of the Kashmiris' Struggle against the Dogra Regime, which his Information Department were preparing and for which more references for the earlier years were needed. I reminded *Sheikh sahib* that one of the criticisms against him was that during his frequent incarcerations he had not used his time usefully in writing up notes but had just spent it in the company of those who were also incarcerated with him, to which he replied somewhat agitatedly:

"I swear, I swear I did write notes and took them out with me from jail. But when I returned home there were many problems. Money was scarce, sometimes there was no food in the house. I used to give my notes to the family to hide. Before I knew where I was, I was back in jail again and the family were harassed, the house searched. That is how my notes were later not available."

This was true particularly of the Bakshi regime when the family endured great financial hardships.

However, having learnt the following year from his family and friends that his hobbies when he had time to indulge them (which was when he was in jail) were gardening and cooking and that wherever he was incarcerated or exiled for any length of time he used to spend it in cooking his favourite *Kashmiri* dishes, always turned a prison yard into a veritable flower and vegetable paradise, even cultivating *Kashmiri saags* to send to his local *Kashmiri* friends, I feel this remark about his notes must have been a flight of poetic fancy meant for a gullible person like myself!

Those who have known Sheikh Abdullah only since he became

a controversial world figure from 1947 onwards cannot perhaps appreciate that at heart he was really a simple, trusting person in his relationships, though he hid this part of himself if he felt he could not trust those around him or felt he had been betrayed. He had a deep rooted concern for his fellow human beings, he was a man of the people who always pursued justice as he saw it and if those with whom he came into conflict didn't see it his way that was just too bad! He was obsessed by his one mission, which to him was more important than anything, that of creating what was for him his New Kashmir, a *Kashmiri* nation. From the time he began his mission in 1930, after having since boyhood seen before his eyes the miseries of his people and projected by those who understood his potentialities, he realised that if his *Kashmiris* were to be involved in a struggle to alter their lives for the better they must be so changed in personality that they acquired dignity, self respect, selfhood—the courage to speak out for their demands—not afraid to die if necessary in order to achieve their aims and all this he gave them through his great personal charisma and sincerity, by completely identifying himself with them, by sacrificing with them, by leading them in their struggle so that they were no longer afraid of going to jail or even of dying, as Allama Iqbal is reputed to have said in 1931 to Maulana Abdul Majid Salik and Syed Mohsin Shah in Lahore.

It is the ultimate rebellion of the oppressed, the enslaved, that shapes and changes history. Throughout the ages history has shown that an inspired individual with devotion to a cause, ability to execute it, can work miracles and can inspire his people, imbue them with his own ideals to work for their betterment and lead them to a new future. It meant transformation from fatalistic pessimism to that of a determined people. This Sheikh Abdullah did in his early years with his people and this first awakening of theirs was based largely upon emotional adoration that here was someone who understood them and was determined to help them.

By April, 1931 Sheikh Abdullah was already the recognised leader of the Reading Room Party of Srinagar, where young unemployed intellectuals and post-graduates newly returned from Aligarh used to meet and discuss what shape a political movement could take. It was older people such as Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah, who had returned to Kashmir after completing his religious studies and travel in India and had, like Sheikh Abdullah as a student in Lahore, been much influenced by the Khilafat Movement (a movement in which thousands of Muslims had suffered imprison-

ment, confiscation of property), along with a few other nationalists of that time such as Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, who was responsible in recognising the special qualities of Sheikh Abdullah as a potential leader of the people and was instrumental in bringing him forward. Persons such as Prof. Ilmuddin Salik of Islamia College, Lahore and others had also been responsible for shaping him in his earlier years as a speaker. There were two other indigenous movements, that of the Congress and the *Akalis*, which had given new dimensions to the nationalist struggle and had their effect on the young Abdullah by the time the 1931 upsurge and movement started.

Mr. M. Amin Gani was a Divisional Accountant in the Kashmir Forest Department until he came to Pakistan in 1948. He has described in his series of articles in issues of the Rawalpindi Urdu newspaper, "*Kasheer*", Oct–Dec., 1982, which he sent me:

"I first remember Sheikh Abdullah as my school teacher in 1930 in the Government High School, Srinagar, from which time he started his struggle against the oppression of the Dogra regime. I remember his participating in processions and making impassioned speeches to massive audiences in the early thirties. Just as with the Indian Congress Party, the All India Muslim League, the Ahrar movement, when their leaders made an appeal to their audiences for funds for their cause, in the same way when *Sheikh sahib* spoke and asked for donations for continuing the work of his organisation, which was at that time still the Muslim Conference, the women in the audience used to take off their heavy silver jewellery and throw it at his feet. The funds thus realised were used to also help the families of the 1931 Martyrs, those whom I myself saw fired upon by the Dogra administration while they were peacefully demonstrating."

In Sheikh Abdullah's New Kashmir he said decisions must always be those of the people and everything and every way was used by him to shape them for this, which is perhaps why he was sometimes called devious. And certainly he was called obstinate by those who did not always agree with him.

To him nothing was more important nor mattered than making his New Kashmir—not going to jail time after time, sometimes under tough conditions, not going hungry, not missing or feeling he was neglecting his family in the difficult years. He also gave the impression of having a great nostalgia right up to the end of his life for the days

of 1925-47, when the struggle was less complicated, when people led more ordered lives in a defined area before the rapid changes in world economic forces and fast moving political events, when he met Allama Iqbal in Lahore, whose more progressive poetry greatly influenced him and when he made many friends in the Punjab and Delhi, political and otherwise, whom he remembered with affection and nostalgia all the rest of his life.

I had no illusions that this was one of the reasons why he enjoyed meeting me, besides having lived in and visited Kashmir a number of times from 1937 onwards and having so many happy memories of those days when my husband was with me and we used to meet him, I still knew and met a number of the old friends in the Punjab who had been a part of his earlier life. He always asked after these old friends and for news of them and asked me to convey his affectionate regards to them. He might have said with the poet:

'Oh God, put back thy Universe and give me yesterday.'

He had been long enough in politics to understand all the current difficulties and to anticipate those ahead in spite of the long gaps of his imprisonments and exponents. He understood that his country's problems were just a part of the world drama of the great struggle of political and economic forces which were going on, nationally and internationally.

While talking to me he was very much concerned about the India and Pakistan situation and said that the two countries must have peace and be united against any outside influences. He was also concerned that at this stage in Pakistan internal order was essential for the sake of the whole subcontinent. He said:

"India is a large country and can contain internal disorders, Pakistan is not, therefore, at this stage internal order is very essential. Peace between India and Pakistan is the most urgent need."

This remark was made of course after the Russian occupation of Kabul and the increasing interest of both Peking and Moscow in Laddakh.

During our November, 1981 meeting I pointed out that his wife's Memoirs would also make a most interesting book. I said:

"As a woman I feel that she had led a most unusual and eventful life. She is a very remarkable person and must have been extraordinarily brave, loyal and resourceful in facing so many difficulties, being married to a leader who has spent so many years in jail, mostly after her marriage and even more years in a political struggle, in addition to having to bring up and educate a family of five children, often with limited financial resources."

Sheikh sahib said:

"Yes, she can write if she wants to."

"But she has to have your permission."

"Yes, of course she can have that, but she will need someone to help her in their preparation."

Sheikh sahib was very wistful about Faiz's not accepting his invitation to visit Kashmir as a State guest, along with his wife, while he was in India in 1980. He said:

"After all, I did perform his '*nikah*'."

I assured him that both would very much have liked to come but that the then Pakistan Ambassador in Delhi, Mr. Abdus Sattar thought it more advisable not to. I added:

"But still my sister may quite likely come with me for a visit next summer."

"We are very angry with them both, now we will not let her come"

he said somewhat reproachfully.

Sheikh sahib even asked me about the welfare of Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, former Foreign Minister of Pakistan and former President Judge of the International Court of Justice, *The Hague*, whom he had first met when he was associated as a member of the All India Kashmir Committee formed in 1931, of which the first Chairman was Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed and to which he contributed generous funds for its cause. The next occasion for their

meeting was at the historic U.N. Security Council January 1948 Session at Lake Success, when Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, as leader of the Pakistan delegation brilliantly presented the Kashmir case for Pakistan in a speech of seven hours' length.

REFERENCE

- ¹ Bazaz, Nagin—"Ahead Of His Times, Prem Nath Bazaz," Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., New Delhi, 1983.

JAMMU REVISITED, 1982

In April, 1982 I went to Jammu again *via* Amritsar for a day to present *Sheikh sahib* with a number of books which I had collected from various sources and which were likely to be useful to his Information Department. One was Kalim Akhtar's book on Sheikh Abdullah himself, up to the year 1964, in Urdu, which in the summer of 1982 he is said to have asked Mr. Yusuf Taing, Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, to read out to him towards the end of his last illness, i.e. in August, 1982, when he was too weak to read himself.

I booked in at the Tourism Complex, which was just being renovated for the beginning of the tourism season. Then I made an appointment to meet *Sheikh sahib* at 6 p.m. and he gave me this time in spite of having returned that same day at 4 p.m. from Poonch from a two days' tour by helicopter, during which time he had held four public meetings, gone up to a hill-top shrine to pray and was due to leave again the next morning for yet another tour.

Besides the pile of books which he needed I had brought Urdu books (children's stories) for the library of his wife's orphanage at Maskeenbagh, with all of which he was very happy. He was especially pleased with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas' "*Khash m Khash*", which I had found after one year of search and also G. M. Sadiq's "*Kashmir Chordo*", both published in Lahore. They were important material for the use of his Information Department for the compilation of the history of the struggle of the *Kashmiris* against the Dogra raj.

I asked *Sheikh sahib* if he had a copy of Sardar Ibrahim Khan's "*The Kashmir Saga*", published in Lahore in 1965; if not I would send him a photostat copy. I added that in his Preface to the book *Sardar sahib* had hinted that certain facts within his personal knowledge concerning the transition period (1947) had been withheld, which would come to light when his Memoirs were published after his death. *Sheikh sahib* chuckled and said:

"I'm afraid that will be a very long time because he is still a comparatively young man!"

Before our discussion finished *Sheikh sahib* asked me what would be the reaction of *Kashmiris* who had left Kashmir in or soon after 1947 for Pakistan, perhaps against their wishes, to an opportunity for returning to their old homes. This was in connection with his very controversial bill on Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Permit for Resettlement in (or permanent return to) Jammu and Kashmir State, about which the Indian press was making a great fuss. I replied that frankly I thought a person who had been well settled in Pakistan for the past 35 years or so, who had a good job or had retired with a pension, had perhaps built a house, had grown-up children with their own careers who had probably never seen Kashmir because of strict visa formalities, would not feel the urgency to return. It wasn't now just a question of a nostalgic return to Jammu and Kashmir, it was a changing of nationality and most persons would not be prepared for this. It could only be elderly people who felt nostalgic about ending their days in their old homeland (like Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah) with their relatives who might be willing to make this change. Or those who had fled from the massacres in Jammu region in November, 1947 and were still living near the Sialkot border in poor circumstances.

And then I said:

"But one thing really confounds me. *Kashmiris*, whether they are on your side of the Line of Actual Control or Pakistan's are first of all *Kashmiris* and then either Indians or *Pakistanis*. Their culture, language, food, identity with one another is of the utmost importance to them."

Sheikh sahib, being of course a dedicated *Kashmiri* was really happy over this comment. Then I myself remembered the comment made as long ago as 1895 in the same context by Walter R. Lawrence, Settlement Commissioner, Kashmir and Jammu State, in his well-known book, "*The Valley of Kashmir*". He said:

"It is difficult to describe a people's character. I would add that the *Kashmiris* possess an individuality and national character which will cling to them wherever they go. I have seen men who have returned to Kashmir, whose ancestors left the country two or three generations ago. Their dress was

changed and their manners had changed, yet they retained unmistakable signs of a Kashmir origin and their ways of thought and of speech showed their descent. The *Kashmiris* are fond of their own country, its food, its water and its dress."

"The *Kashmiris* are opposed to changes. If it had not been for their essentially conservative nature the *Kashmiris* would have been blotted out as a distinct nationality by their strong superiors, the *Moghuls*, *Pathans*, *Sikhs*, *Dogras*. These successive dynasties have left no impress on the national character."

I also remembered that a short time ago a young *Pakistani*, who was a student in a British University and was writing a thesis on a particular period on Urdu literature, came to see me in connection with my husband's writings and finished his enquiries with an exasperated question:

"Please tell me why it is that any person I meet here who comes from a *Kashmiri* family makes a point of emphasising this fact?"

Well, this actually proves the point that to a *Kashmiri* his cultural pattern and sense of identity as a *Kashmiri* are very important to him.

When I rose to leave *Sheikh sahib* said:

"You are here only for one night and tomorrow I am again going out on tour so why not come back for dinner just with the two of us?"

I agreed.

Before dinner, sitting with *Begumsahiba* and *Sheikh sahib*, we were reminiscing and laughing about former events, including the January, 1948 U.N. Security Council Session at Lake Success, on the Kashmir problem.

I related how my husband had said that when leaving for New York the Pakistan delegation were briefed thus:

"You are a new nation and are going on a very serious mission. Don't give the impression that because you come from a new

country you don't know how to mix socially. You will be invited to parties and receptions, so behave as the Americans do."

And everybody did! I told a few entertaining incidents relating to that period!

Sheikh sahib laughed as he recalled what had happened to him at that time. In January, 1948 he was forty-two years of age, very much taller than average, in fact 6 feet and 4 inches in height as was Abraham Lincoln, one time President of the U.S.A., and distinguished looking. From being the Lion of Kashmir, idolized by thousands of his *Kashmiris*, he had overnight become an international figure due to the Indo-Pak Conflict in the U.N. Security Council Session. The Indian delegation was also invited to receptions and parties. As he, being a non-smoker and non-drinker put it:

"Those who wanted to drink, drank. But I had a special problem. Whenever I went to receptions and parties the young girls would crowd round me, like hero-worshipping teenagers round a film star or a cricket player. At one reception a group of them made a plan—a number surrounded me, some sitting on the arms of my chair, others with hands on my shoulder or round my neck, while yet another quickly produced a camera and took several shots of the whole group. I had palpitations. Here was I, now because of politics an international figure. If these photos were to appear in the international press who would take me seriously as a leader with a mission and worse still, how would I face my wife back home? But somehow I managed to retrieve the film from the young girl and so was saved from what could have been an awkward situation!"

In spite of the Indian intelligence Sheikh Abdullah, my husband and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, then a member of the Pakistan delegation, did manage to hold a secret meeting in a New York hotel, as related by *Sheikh sahib* in an interview taped for me by him on August 15th, 1980, at Srinagar.

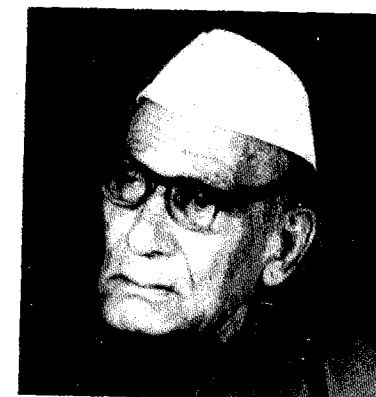
When I met *Sheikh sahib* in Jammu in April, 1982 and was checking about his birth date he said then that his Information Department was doing the research about it as at the time when he was born proper records were not kept by the people. But I mentioned that his old friend from Lahore student days, 1925–27, Sardar



Dr. Muhammad Iqbal in 1932



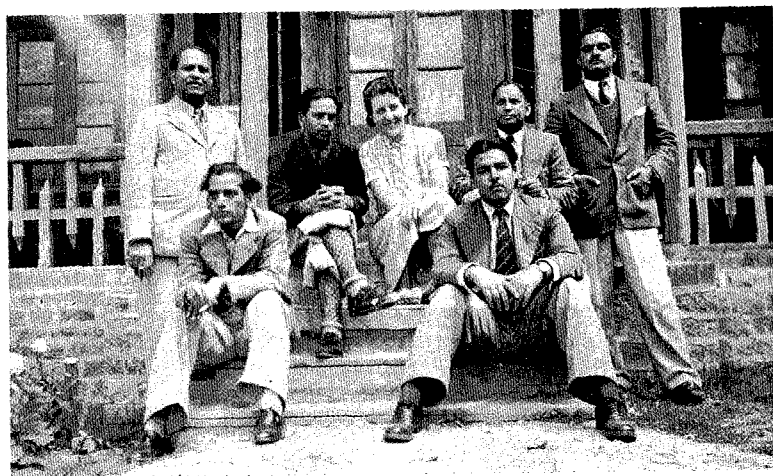
*Dr. Taseer Composing
a Pahari Geet in Srinagar, 1942*



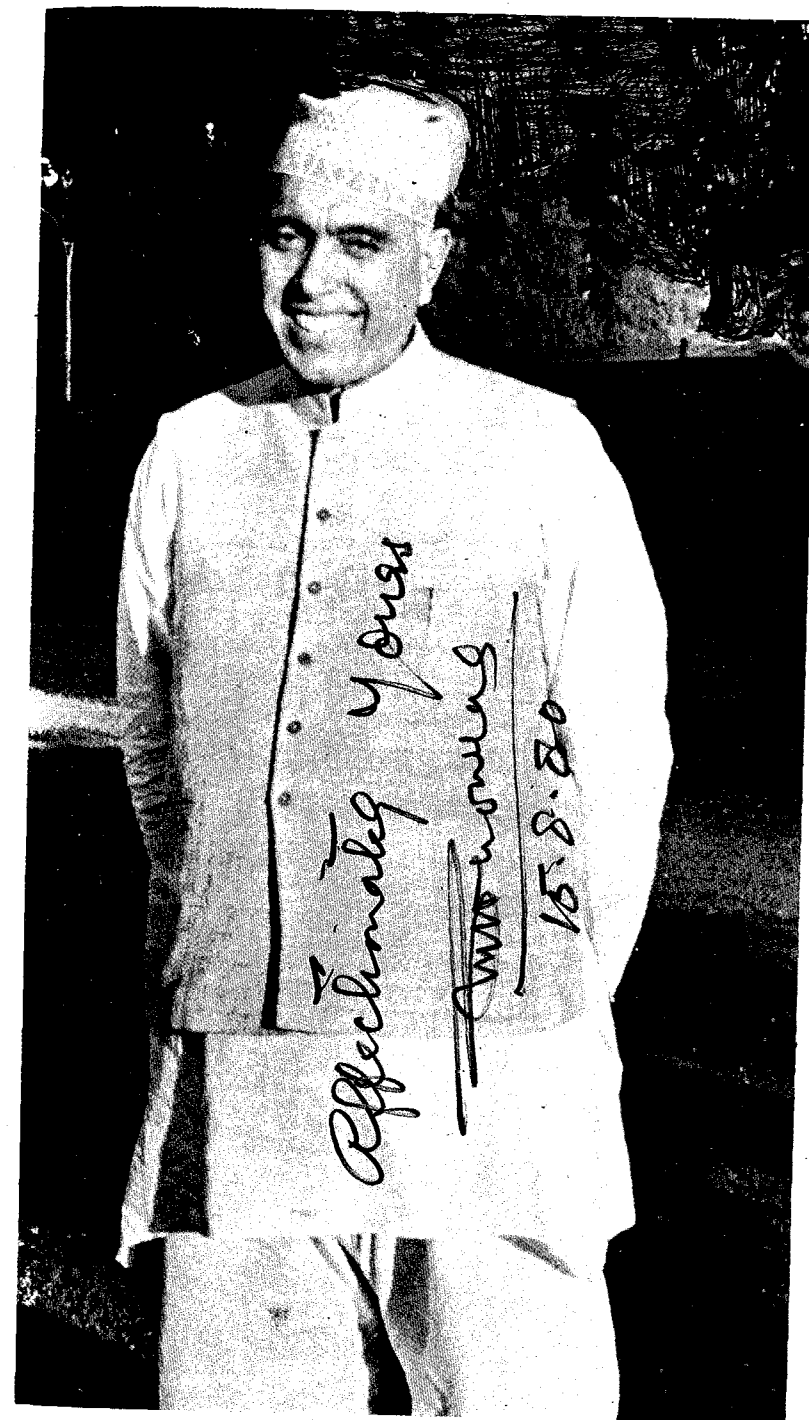
*Lalla Mulk Raj Saraf,
the Pioneer of Journalism
in Kashmir State*



The Author's Family in Kashmir in Summer, 1938



l. to r.—Dr. M. D. Taseer, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, the Author, Anwar Masood, Dr. Noor Hussain, Raja Maqsood, holidaying in Kashmir, 1938



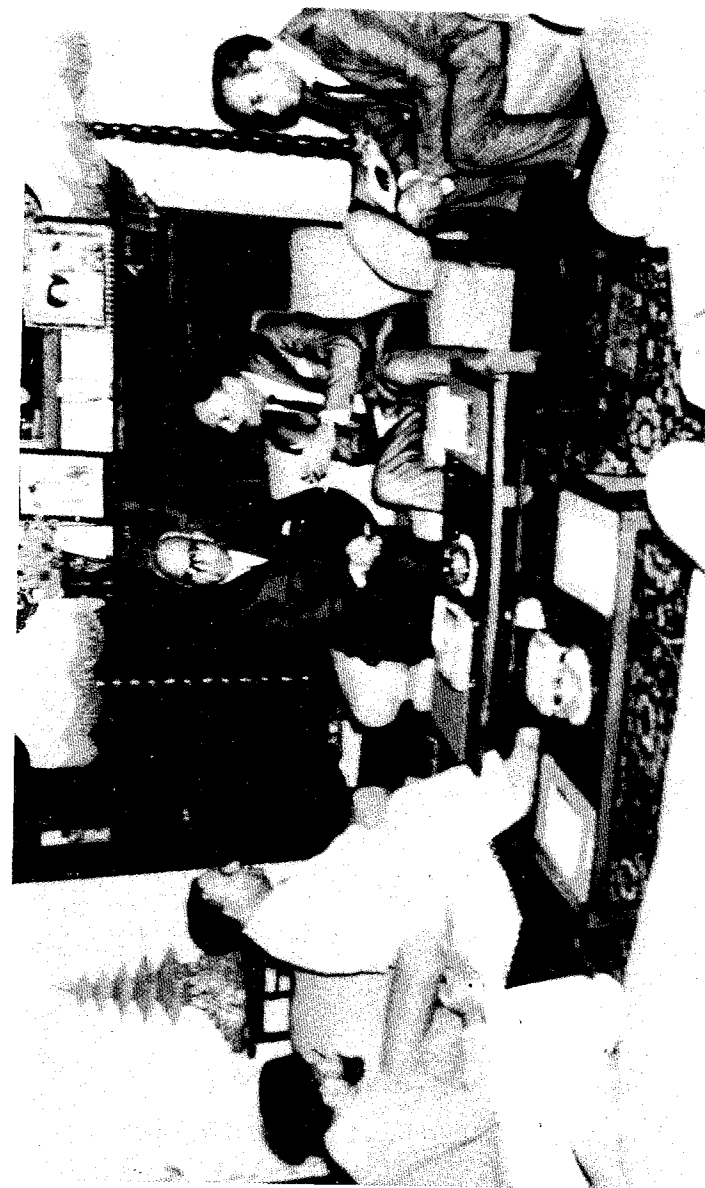
Sher-i-Kashmir in his Garden at Srinagar



K. H. Khurshid, President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in discussion with Sheikh Abdullah, May 1964



Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg and Sheikh Abdullah in London, March, 1965 on their way to perform Haj

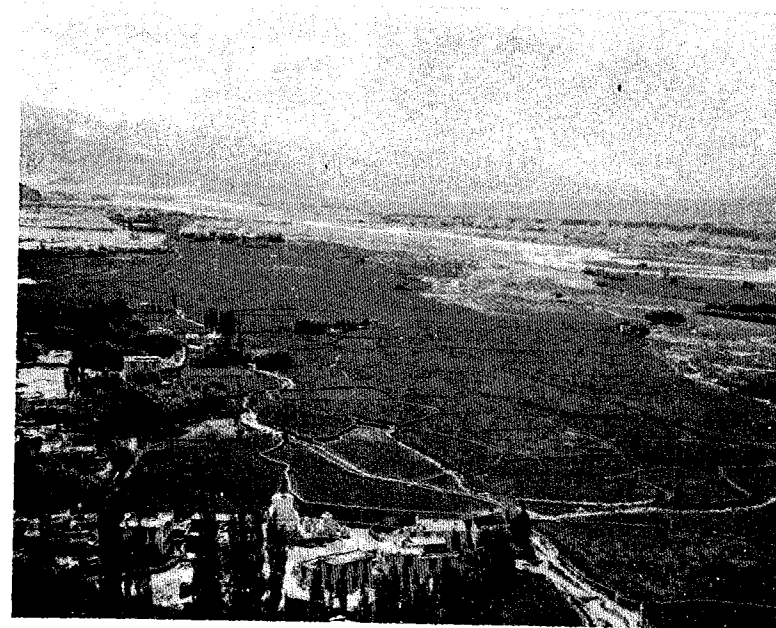


Top Ranking Meeting for Discussing the Kashmir Issue, held in President's House, Rawalpindi, May 26th, 1964

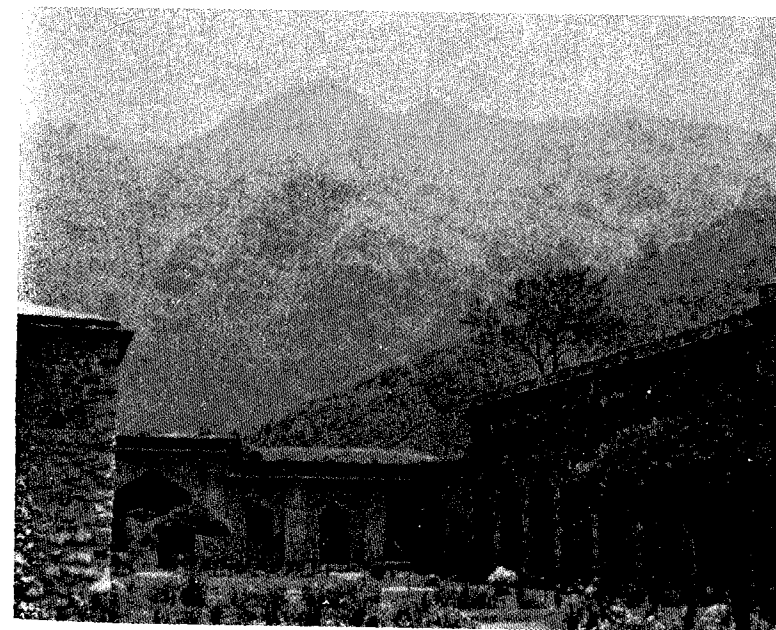


Sheikh Abdullah and the Author in July, 1980

SCENES FROM KASHMIR



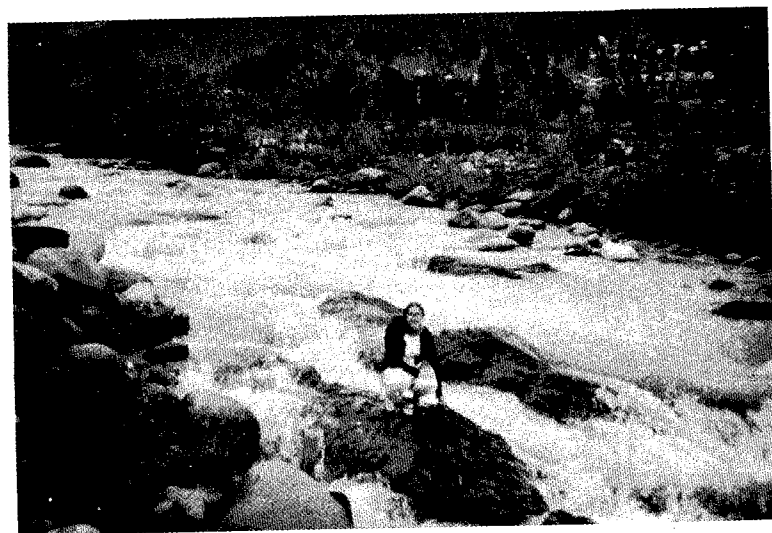
Leh Airfield



Pari Mahal near Chashma-i-Shahi, Srinagar



*A View of Manisbal Lake, with Empress Noor Jehan's
Moghul Garden, Garoka*



The Turbulent Lidder River at Pahalgam



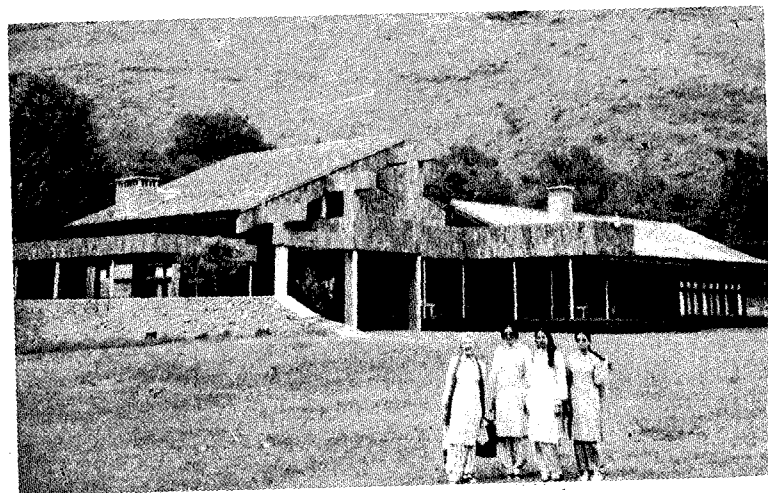
*Chara-i-Sharif Shrine of Sheikh Alam Hazrat Sheikh
Nooruddin Wali, Patron Saint of Kashmiris, near Srinagar*



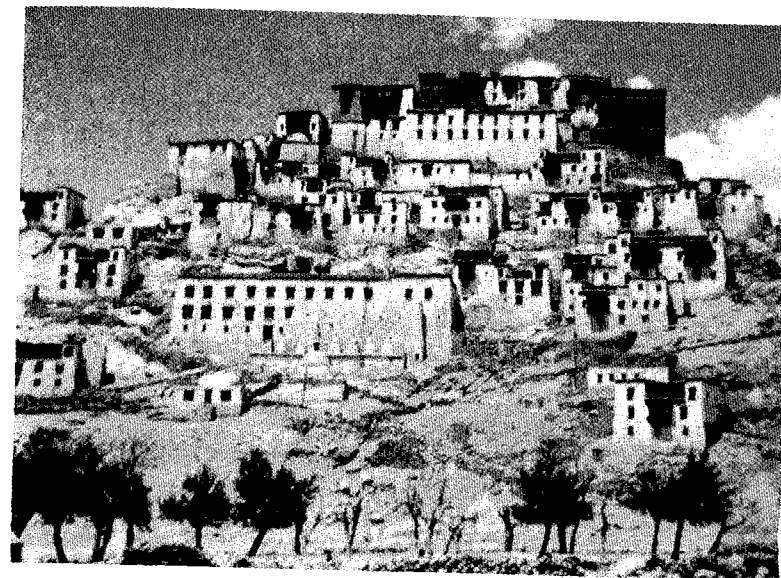
*At Arabel Falls—a Group of School Students from Srinagar
Saying their Prayers*



Choghamsar S.O.S. Village, Leh, Laddakh, 12,000 feet, the Highest in the Word



Dachigam Shooting Lodge, Kashmir



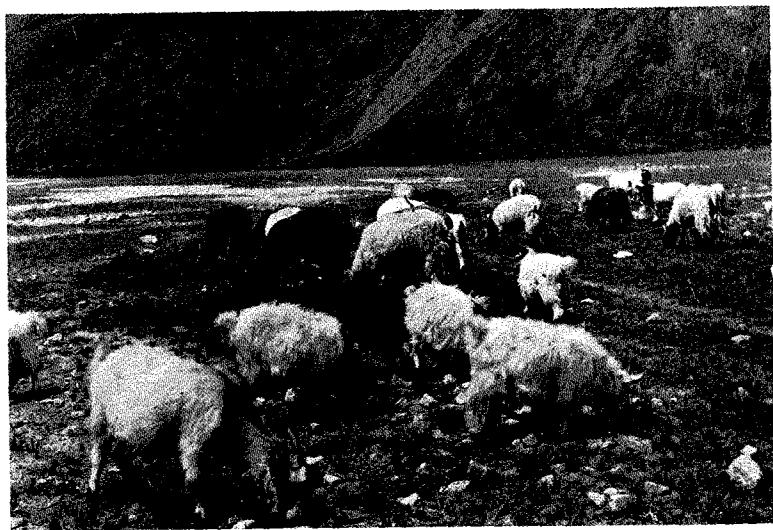
Spittuk Monastery, Leh, Laddakh



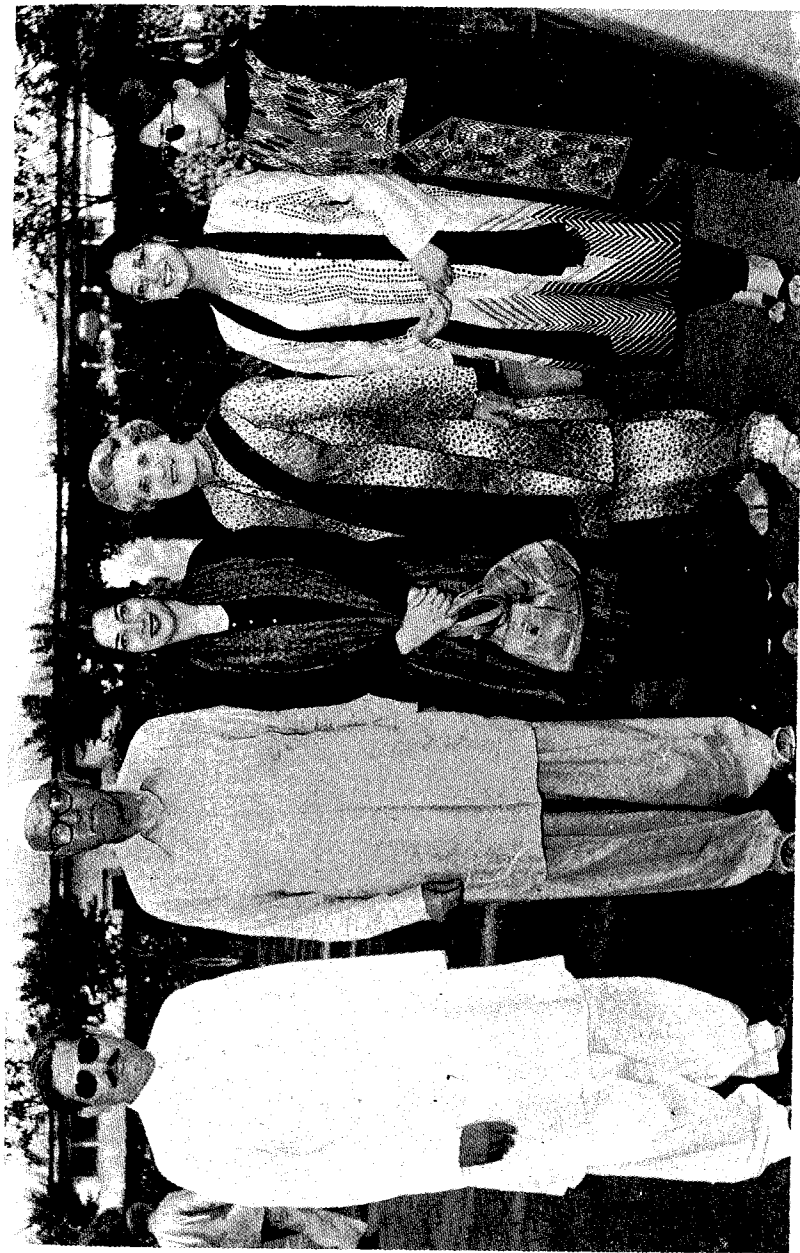
The Floating Gardens of Dal Lake



Bakarwaals grazing their Sheep in Gulmarg in Summer



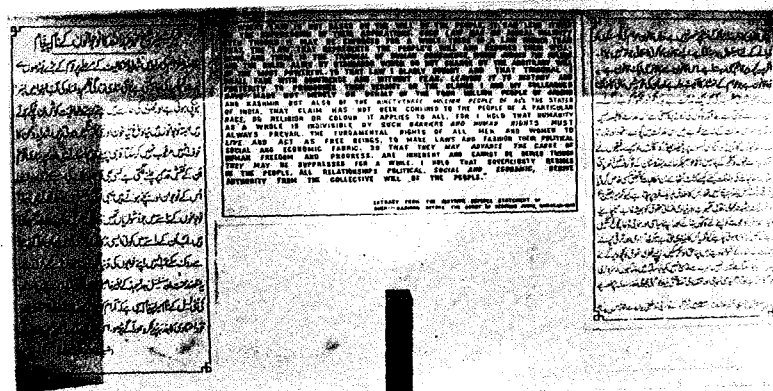
Shawl Goats and Sheep grazing near the Tibetan Border



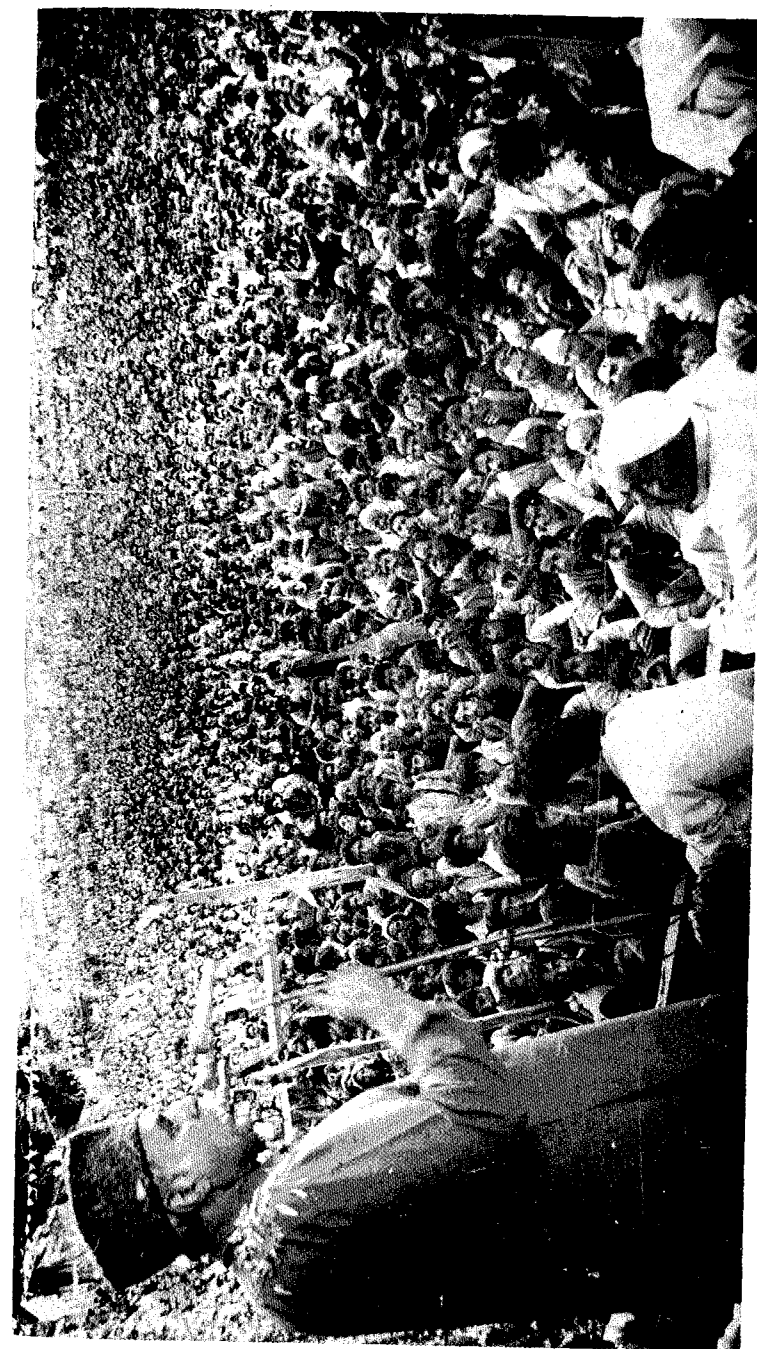
Shahnawaz, Sheikh Abdullah, Zakia, the Author, Tarfa and Faryah, June, 1981



Grave of Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah,
Baba-e-Qoom, by Dal Lake, Srinagar



The Plaque beyond the Grave of Baba-e-Qoom at Dal Lake,
Srinagar



Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Elected Chief Minister, addressing a Public Meeting in 1983

Ajit Singh Sarhadi, now retired in Chandigarh had told me in the previous summer:

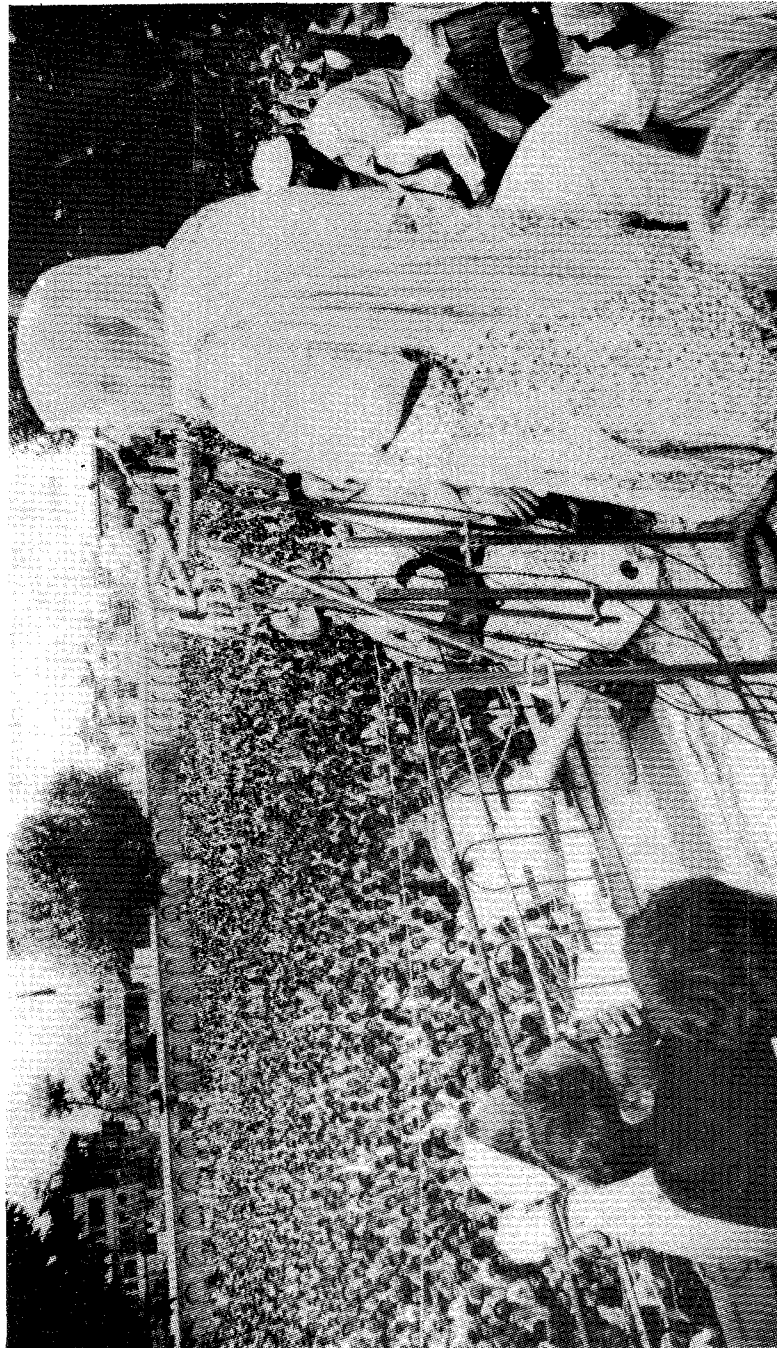
"Sheikh Abdullah was born on 21st November, 1905 and I also was born in 1905"

and I added that this brought him within the sign of Scorpio and he definitely had all the qualities listed of a person born within this period, i.e. 23rd October—21st November. As I began to list the qualities he smiled and replied that Islam made no provisions for such beliefs. Then I found in an edition of "*Nawa-i-Subh*", Srinagar, 6th November, 1981 on account of a function of a group of prominent citizens of Srinagar having celebrated *Sheikh sahib's* 68th birthday on 21st November, 1972! So I prefer to believe that this date is the correct one, i.e. November 21st, especially when I look at the character description of a Scorpio—provision or no provision in Islam! Here it is:

"Highly imaginative, capable of deep, strong emotions and quick actions. A tendency to know what he wants and to go after it at once. His judgment is good and he is brash only when necessary but otherwise subtle and persuasive. Scorpio can also be stubborn and secretive. He is aggressive, brave, hazarding himself to all perils. He is a man of appetites.

"Whatever the Scorpio does he does with all his mind and heart and he knows how to drive others to work for his cause. The Scorpio is passionate about everything—work, play, friendships, politics, religion. Scorpio may be disappointed when others fail to live up to his strength of feeling. The Scorpio cannot be tied down to a dull, routine job. He wants a challenge, an impossible task to perform or a hopeless battle to win. Scorpio is subtle, capable of making secret plans, working indirectly and alone and fighting on long after others have given up. He finds it hard to unburden himself to friends and loved ones or even to professional advisers, it goes against his natural secretiveness and his desire to fight his own battles."

Just change the label of "Scorpio" and you have a convincing description of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah himself. So even though the official date of birth for Sheikh Abdullah has now been given as December 5th, I prefer to believe in the date which I unearthed. Later on, *Sheikh sahib's* elder daughter, Khalida, also once told



Begum Abdullah addressing a Public Meeting, 1984

me that he himself did not think that the date decided by his Information Department was the correct one.

But even if one accepts December 5th, which brings him within the orbit of Sagittarius, (November 22nd–December 21st) the qualities listed by Linda Goodman, world famous astrologer, are impressively his:

Sagittarius, 22nd Nov.—Dec. 21st

1. All Sagittarians gaze at the world through the measuring eye of Truth.
2. The Sagittarian's sense of honesty and truthfulness is particularly rough and rugged. There is seldom any scope for discreet behaviour in it and the tactlessness with which he strikes right and left in season and out of season, is bound to take anyone by surprise.
3. The mind of the Sagittarian is keyed to a high-calibre intelligence.
4. There is no touch of subtlety in what he says or writes. He is blunt to the core to an amazing degree.
5. The Sagittarian is a remarkable person in many ways, possessing extraordinary vision and warmth.
6. It is greatly stimulating to hear him talk of his ideals with his characteristic enthusiasm and the experience is simply unforgettable.
7. He attaches utmost importance to the exercise of honesty of purpose, speech and action in all matters.
8. Doubtless the Sagittarian is frank, honest and open-hearted but sometimes intolerant also. His likes and dislikes are very pronounced and he is easily susceptible of a fiery explosion. Euphemism is not something to embellish his expression. He knows not the art of concealing matters with a superabundant use of words.

Linda Goodman, American Institute of Astro-Analysis, New York.²

REFERENCES

- ¹ Lawrence, Walter R. — "The Valley of Kashmir", Kesar Publishers, Srinagar, 1967, p. 282.
- ² Goodman, Linda—American Institute of Astro-Analysis, New York.

THE LAST DAYS OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH

Sheikh Abdullah fell ill in the second week of June, 1982—a heart attack brought on by yet another helicopter tour to Doha and speechifying—an illness from which he was destined not to recover. In Lahore all the media news we received was that he had suffered a heart attack and was hospitalised.

I decided to plan my projected visit to Kashmir for this time. I reached Srinagar on the 26th June and at the airport asked my taxi-driver what was the latest news about *Sheikh sahib*. He told me he was in his own home, which sounded reassuring. Mrs. Indira Gandhi had flown to Srinagar two days before and had been put up in the Dachigam Shooting Lodge, together with her son, Rajiv, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. On arrival at the airport the family had driven straight to Sheikh Abdullah's house to enquire about his health before going on to Dachigam Shooting Lodge. Mrs. Gandhi first met *Sheikh sahib* three days before I did, when he was still flat on his back eight days after his heart attack, but for her visit he was specially propped up in bed with a back rest for the official TV and press coverage of the meeting between the two leaders.

I booked in at Nedous Hotel and as I was returning to the hotel after making a few purchases from a nearby shop I saw a large crowd waiting at the side of Maulana Azad Road, at the entrance to the smaller road which led to the Chief Minister's house. On asking I was told that Mrs. Gandhi was inside and the crowd was waiting to see her when she came out. This was her second visit before she returned to Delhi and this time she met *Begumsahiba* as well as *Sheikh sahib*.

The morning after my arrival I was allowed by *Begumsahiba* to see *Sheikh sahib* for a short time, still flat on his back, voice hardly above a whisper even one-and-a-half weeks after his attack, but as usual mentally alert and giving a mischievous smile when I cynically commented on Mrs. Indira Gandhi's two visits, for her Congress (I)

Party had really been harassing him the previous month over the bill he was bringing in for the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Permit for Resettlement (or permanent return to) Jammu and Kashmir State.

It was the 27th June when I first saw *Sheikh sahib* and he had been really ill since the 16th. Having myself worked in a Lahore hospital for fifteen years in an administrative post I had seen heart patients and, not knowing how serious his heart attack was (this was his second) I tried to cheer up everyone and perhaps reassure myself by reminding them that the usual bed rest required for a heart patient was six weeks and, counting off the weeks on my fingers, assured *Sheikh sahib* that if he obeyed the rules and didn't think he knew better than his doctors he should be well enough to lead the prayers as usual in the Srinagar Eidgah on *Eid-ul-Fitr*. He merely smiled, while no-one else commented except his secretary, Mr. Ghulam Ahmed, who said rather doubtfully:

"Yes, well perhaps".

I had brought affectionate messages and letters from a number of friends in Lahore and my husband's family for his quick recovery and an armful of books for him and for *Begumsahiba's* orphanage children. A copy of the memorial number of "*Narangi Khyal*" magazine about my husband (which magazine he had once edited) I inscribed for *Sheikh sahib* as "*Sher-i-Kashmir*", which was the name by which I had always remembered him. I opened the book at the first page and showed the enlarged photograph of Taseer sitting on his bed wearing *kurta* and *pyjama* to write an article—his favourite posture—the photograph having been taken by me in our house on the Boulevard in Srinagar in 1942 summer. *Begumsahiba* and Khalida tried to put on enthusiastic smiles, but next October at the time of the *chehlum* when I recollected this first visit I thought how difficult it must have been for them to show interest when they already knew that *Sheikh sahib* hardly had the time left to him in this world than to do more than glance through the book. Outside his bedroom his son-in-law, Ghulam Muhammad Shah was pacing up and down and sons, Dr. Mustafa and Tariq anxiously waiting. His four grandchildren trooped in (children of Dr. Farooq Abdullah) for a few minutes, shepherded by their mother. His favourite, Sara, a blue eyed, fair haired beauty, about seven years' old, pushed her school report and some drawings before him for his approval.

G. M. Shah was looking sullen behind his sun glasses, which he

wore always, it was said on account of eye trouble. At this time *Sheikh sahib's* heart condition had not been stabilised. He was still flat on his back in bed. Mrs. Indira Gandhi had come and gone, after meeting him twice, once in the presence of Begum Abdullah and a certain understanding was said to have been reached between them—the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly would cast their votes for the candidate for Presidentship of the Union favoured by Mrs. Gandhi, while she would give her support to *Sheikh sahib's* choice of the most desirable successor to replace him as Chief Minister of the State—his eldest son, Dr. Farooq, very outgoing, very popular with the public, but politically immature. As against this G. M. Shah was seasoned in politics, having worked with Sheikh Abdullah for years, had often gone to jail in his cause, but was said to be unpopular with the people—obviously he had none of the charisma of his father-in-law or his brother-in-law. *Sheikh sahib* understood that Dr. Farooq would be the best choice for the State Chief Ministership, while G. M. Shah felt the office should by right have gone to him and from now on, right up to the time of *Sheikh sahib's* death on September 8th he bitterly opposed every effort to bring him into an equationship with the other Working Committee members of the National Conference, finally even giving his resignation as Minister of Works, which was accepted by Sheikh Abdullah.

At my next visit, two days later, *Sheikh sahib* was sitting up in bed and was able to ask me in a now quite normal voice what I had been doing to amuse myself. Amuse myself! I almost choked trying to find a suitable reply. But then I thought I had better take him seriously and not spend my time feeling grieved about his illness, but should make some pretence of enjoying my visit to Kashmir. As I left by the garden it was one seething mass of visitors from all parts of the State anxiously awaiting news, Dr. Farooq coming and going and the offices also packed with people on different errands, with three secretaries frantically trying to deal with everybody. One quite young woman from Jammu, sitting on the lawn told me proudly that she was an elected Congress (I) member, and not nominated to her seat.

So the next day I booked a day coach trip to Pahalgam. The coach was two-thirds full of honeymoon couples. I said to the old man from whom I bought cashew nuts at one of the stalls by the side of the road at the Avantipura Temple ruins, where we made a stop:

"Today is Friday. Will you be going to this mosque (nearby) to say your prayers?"

"Of course."

"Then please say a prayer on my behalf that your *Sheikh sahib* may recover quickly from his illness."

He nodded happily and called along the line of fruit sellers:

"Eh, she also is a *Mussulman!*"

All in all I found that my day's trip did nothing to relieve my depression. But then I came to the conclusion that grieving or moping is really a form of self-indulgence and, therefore, to be condemned. Did not Sheikh Abdullah himself tell his own family when he knew how few days were left to him on this earth that they were not to mourn for him but to continue the mission which he had begun and that they must learn to live without him?

The doctors, who had earlier advised more rest, now said that *Sheikh sahib* should try to become mobile so on my third visit on July 3rd I found him sitting on a chair in the vestibule, sipping a cup of tea, but opposite was his secretary, Ghulam Ahmed, with a pile of files for decision-making. *Sheikh sahib* had not the energy to speak to me, so with a pat on the shoulder he got up and returned to his bedroom. I hurried to the rear of the house to call his daughter, Khalida to see to him, but when I saw the two sons, Dr. Mustafa and Tariq chatting together in the drawing room my temper got the better of me and I told them they should be taking better care of their father. Then I went to the office and pleaded with his faithful secretary, Om Parkash Gupta not to involve *Sheikh sahib* so soon with State work. I implored:

"Why don't you send him away to that beautiful Dachigam Shooting Lodge in the forest which he loves so much and let him have peace to recover. Just send his immediate family with him and a doctor."

On Parkash smiled tolerantly and commented that I ought to know *Sheikh sahib* well enough by now to know that he would never exile himself from his duties. Besides he was not yet stabilized and doctors and equipment had to be readily available.

Then of course there were the streams of visitors (one friend came even from Saudi Arabia, where proper news was not available).

to enquire about *Sheikh sahib's* health, all hoping to see his face. All had to be dealt with diplomatically. People like Union Ministers could not be refused a short visit, others had to be seen by *Begum-sahiba*, while yet others were asked to sign their names in the visitors' book.

During this month of my visit I developed the greatest admiration for *Begumsahiba*, for the major burden was hers, in spite of the heroic co-operation of Dr. Farooq Abdullah (who was burdened with administrative affairs and in dashing between Delhi and Srinagar), her two daughters, daughter-in-law, two other sons, Dr. Mustafa and Tariq, nephew Sheikh Nazir and the loyal office staff. Supervising the treatment of her husband's illness, showing diplomacy in receiving all kinds of guests and visitors, deciding who must be allowed to see *Sheikh sahib* for a few minutes, those with whom she herself must sit and chat for a while, the supervision of the domestic arrangements, no light task when visitors were pouring in all the day. In case there was any emergency for which the resident doctor would have to be called. She had to remain in *Sheikh sahib's* room at night, which meant broken sleep for her, because of the restlessness induced in her husband by the drugs he was taking.

Always she had to show patience, good temper, tact. Her tirelessness was amazing, for after all she is now not a young woman. So many political problems also had to be dealt with, *Sheikh sahib* conscious of each and every battle that had to be fought, the doctors and she all the time trying to prevent him from getting too much involved and others from harassing him.

The next step was to move him into his garden which he loved so much, for short periods, but this also had to be times when people would not bother him too much. Then came the drama when the State Assembly members were to meet to cast their votes for the President of the Indian Union, i.e. Sardar Zail Singh, the Congress (I) candidate, on which occasion one witnessed *Sheikh sahib's* iron will.

First *Sheikh sahib* instructed the Chief Whip, Mr. G. M. Shah to issue a whip to all M.L.As. and M.Ps. of the party to cast their votes in favour of him. Then on Thursday, 8th July *Sheikh sahib* announced a dinner in honour of the Congress (I) nominee and invited all legislators from the Ruling and Opposition Parties to meet Sardar Zail Singh (who had been invited specially to Srinagar for this purpose).

Dr. Farooq represented his father, thus making it clear that he was to be their choice. Being what he was *Sheikh sahib* had also to set his Assembly members an example and so, on or about the 10th, in spite of the pleadings of his physician, Dr. Jalaluddin and the weeping of his wife (as she told me the next day) he got himself carried in a chair to the car, car to the Assembly, then chair again to the voting box, where he cast his vote before all his members and the same procedure repeated to return home. That effort, an act of recklessness, physical courage, cost two days' extra rest in bed, but meant that the votes were cast as wanted.

Two days later, July 12th, i.e. on the day when the results of the State Assembly Vote for the Union President were announced I was invited for the evening. *Sheikh sahib* was sitting in the small drawing room on an armchair, feet up on a round cushion, dressed as usual in a crisp white *kurta* and *shalwar*. His faithful daughter, Khalida was kneeling in front of him with a tube of cream, gently smoothing from feet upwards. This was meant to help improve the blood circulation to the heart and I saw her doing this on several occasions. Once I asked her:

"Why do you tire yourself by doing this when you have so many other duties now-a-days? Why not keep a physiotherapist for this task?"

She replied quickly:

"No, now we don't need a physiotherapist."

And it was only later that I understood the import of her words. When I returned to Srinagar in October for the *chehlum* I asked Khalida if, at the time she was doing the massage to help improve her father's blood circulation, she knew that he had not much longer to live and she replied:

"Yes, we all knew."

Nephew Nazir, the younger son, Tariq and two or three others now rushed in with the news—the Assembly voting was in favour of Sardar Zail Singh. The sudden transformation in *Sheikh sahib* was something to be seen. He was a completely changed person—he seemed almost "high". The tremendous effort of will-power and dogged determination which he had put in two days earlier in getting

himself transported to the Assembly chambers to cast his own vote before all his members had really paid off. There was a joyous look on his face as all the details were related to him in *Kashmiri* and everybody laughed and joked with relief.

Then in came a visitor, the Nepalese Minister for Tourism, accompanied by the then State Minister for Tourism. They had been on a tour of various beauty spots in the Valley to get ideas for improvement of tourism in Nepal. After the usual greetings he presented *Sheikh sahib* with a red velvet silk lined case in which reposed a finely carved silver *kukri*. I murmured softly to my left hand neighbour:

/"But Islam is a religion of peace."

Back came the swift reply:

"Ah, but this is a weapon of defence!"

In celebration of the political victory sandwiches, pastries and *patties* were served to all of us instead of the usual simple *kulchas* and tea.

* * * * *

It is somewhat unbelievable but true that although after my marriage I had spent four summers in the Valley and even lived in Srinagar for two years I had never visited the city proper.

So one Friday my friend Sadika Mahmud, a retired head-mistress, decided that this deficiency must be put right and took me in a *shikara* on a tour down the river from Amira Kadal to Nawa Kadal. Before we reached the mosque on the right bank below the Third Bridge we felt very sorry to see a line of young boys performing their ablutions by the steps of the river before going to the mosque for their Juma prayers. Why were we sorrowful? Well, read the following descriptions of Srinagar city and guess why!

"Srinagar became the capital of Kashmir round about A.D. 960. The city proper although picturesque to look at consists of thousands of houses crowded together haphazardly on either side of Jhelum river which winds through Srinagar, with the greater part of the houses on the right bank. The majority of

them are several storeys high, crazily built, having small, airless rooms, are made of brick and wood, with no verandahs, mostly with no latrines or laid on water, built in cramped lanes winding on and on, with no drainage. These narrow lanes follow on for a long way in various directions until they broaden out into somewhat wider roads and then one feels one can take deep breaths of fresh air.

"The seven bridges of Srinagar which cross the river are Amira Kadal, Haba Kadal (named after a poetess queen of Kashmir), Fateh Kadal, Zaina Kadal, Ali Kadal, Nawa Kadal, Saffra Kadal. The city proper lies between Haba Kadal and Nawa Kadal. A new bridge leading from Dal Gate to the fashionable colony of Rajbagh built beyond the first bridge (Amira Kadal) has of necessity had to be called Zero Kadal!"

In 1892 the Chief Medical Officer of Kashmir, reporting on the cholera epidemic, during which more than 11,712 persons died, made the following remarks about the city, as related by Walter R. Lawrence, I.C.S., C.I.E., Settlement Commissioner of Kashmir and Jammu State:

"Within an area of six square miles live a population of 118,960 in houses low and dirty, built irregularly and without any method, on narrow tortuous paths. Ventilation in the city is, therefore, very imperfect. Few houses have latrines and small lanes and alleys are used as such. There is no drainage. Slush, filth and ordure are washed by storm water into the river and the Nalla Mar, which supplies the city with drinking water. People were immersed in a polluted atmosphere caused by the products of putrefactive and fermentable matter accumulated in houses and numerous narrow lanes, passages, nooks and crevices, which intersect the city."¹

A description of the type of drainage of London city's houses at the beginning of last century will show that the inhabitants lived in much the same conditions!

At this point I am reminded of the following quotations reported by Justice M. Y. Saraf from a speech of Sheikh Abdullah made when:

"After converting Muslim Conference into National Conference he had without attracting any substantial support from the

non-Muslims even lost the ground he so solidly held among Muslims. Addressing a public meeting in Srinagar on 26th July, 1941 he asked:

"In a country like Kashmir where *Kashmiri Pandits* cannot even tolerate the construction of a bathroom by Muslims on the bank of the Jhelum what is the use of preaching Nationalism? People who cannot even tolerate the washing of hands and face by us on the banks of the Jhelum surely cannot be united with us?"²

According to *Sheikh sahib's* friend, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller, in 1930-31 when he was living in one room with no facilities, at which time Ghulam Ahmed, as a young lad used to go and stay with him for a few days at a time, *Sheikh sahib* himself used to go down to the river bank to perform his ablutions!

After having myself seen something of the drainage of Srinagar city, part of the wastage of which has of necessity to flow into the river I would say that the *Pandits* certainly had a point in objecting to the construction of bathrooms by Muslims on the banks of the Jhelum for their ablutions before prayers! From the health point of view certainly.

From Nawa Kadal Sadika and I left our *shikara* and walked about 1½ miles through narrow, gloomy, airless lanes, with houses having wooden latrines suspended on an upper storey of each building, which had dropped their contents into the gutter of the lane below. Then we entered a door of a tall building, walked up a narrow staircase having doors on either side through which one could catch glimpses of families inside. We knocked on a door on the third storey and were admitted into the home of an ex-student of my ex-school principal friend, who lovingly welcomed us and begged us to stay on for a meal. When I remarked to Sadika later:

"How can human beings bear to live thus, why don't they go crazy?"

she replied sensibly:

"Ultimately human beings can get used to anything and when I showed you the Juma Masjid, the lawns of which were crowded with women and young girls I told you that this is one of the

places to which they come in order to have space to move about and to breathe fresh air."

And I remembered Amritsar, Old Delhi and Old Lahore cities which I had already seen recently at close quarters and comparing their similarities, agreed with her.

As for Srinagar city I think nothing can be changed to improve it unless half the population is evacuated to other living quarters and the emptied lines of houses are blasted so as to leave space to make drainage, flush and drinking water arrangements and admit light and air to the dwellings of the rest of the city inhabitants.

* * * * *

Now, as my Lahore friends had not yet secured their visas for Kashmir I shifted from Nedous Hotel and went to stay with my friend, Begum Zafar Ali, M.L.A., who had worked with *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba* for a number of years, as well as in the Education Department under different administrations. She was an outstanding woman. She studied after marriage and was the first *Kashmiri* Muslim woman Matriculate, receiving a gold medal for her achievement. She retired after 30 years of service in the Education Department.

Her father, Agha Syed Hussain was the first *Kashmiri* to pass Matriculation and was Law and Education Minister in Maharaja Hari Singh's Cabinet at the time, 1930 when Sheikh Abdullah, the first *Kashmiri* Muslim to pass his M.Sc. from Aligarh University, was refused a post as a Laboratory Assistant in the Forest Department by the *Maharaja's* regime on the excuse that he was inexperienced and over-age (i.e. the age of 22 years having recently been fixed for joining educational service) and he was offered a post as a primary school teacher at Rs. 60/- a month in the same school from which he himself had matriculated, the laboratory post being given to a Hindu B.Sc.).

By now 81 years of age she managed her house with one young servant boy, cooking her own food and always entertaining the large number of friends and acquaintances and social workers who were dropping in. This was in addition to her legislative work and social work commitments. I was with her for *Eid-ul-Fitr*. She began her cooking preparations a day ahead—Cakes, toffees and so on—in

case *Eid* should be announced a day earlier or later than expected. For the two *Eid* days I spent with her we counted one hundred guests who dropped in—Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs.

Although All India Radio announced on the evening of the 22nd July that no *Eid* moon had been sighted Jammu and Kashmir waited. An announcement came quite late from *Pakistan Radio* that the *Eid* moon had been sighted and tomorrow would be *Eid-ul-Fitr* in Pakistan, so Jammu and Kashmir, being adjacent geographically to Pakistan decided to keep the same time-table and when people awoke before dawn on the 23rd to eat their "*sehri*" they found that it was to be *Eid* for them, while the Muslims of the rest of India kept their *Eid* a day later.

Before I arrived in Srinagar towards the end of June I had written to *Sheikh sahib* that I had taped two "Yaadish Bakhair" programmes from a series from Lahore TV station, because one was about my husband's childhood friend, Dr. Nazir Ahmed, who was also *Sheikh sahib's* class-fellow in Islamia College, Lahore and the other about Ghulam Abbas, short story writer, also known to *Sheikh sahib* from those early days, while his friend Hafiz Jullundhri comes into one programme and I in another. I had written that I would bring these tapes with me so that he could see these programmes in which his old friends appear. His reply, dated June 10th must have been dictated and signed before his heart attack of the 8th, but despatched two days later and said:

"I have no VCR of my own. However, we can manage to have one temporarily to watch the programme mentioned by you."

His living, pattern in his own house was very simple. A portable radio remained by his side always so that he could listen to the news, but the TV in the drawing room was seen mostly by other members of the family.

However, when I reached Srinagar on the 26th the question of mentioning a VCR programme didn't arise because *Sheikh sahib* was still so very ill. But about three weeks later while I was staying with Begum Zafar Ali, early one evening she decided she must go and call to enquire after *Sheikh sahib's* health, so we went together and found him sitting in the garden dressed in white *kurta* and *shalwar* and Mr. Ghulam Ahmed, his secretary with him.

After some conversation I mentioned that I was sorry it hadn't been possible for him to see these two "*Yaadish Bakhair*" programmes because I felt they would have been of sentimental interest to him, recalling as they did the old days and old friends of Lahore. At once he asked his secretary to call his younger daughter, Suraiya. When she came *Sheikh sahib* asked her to arrange to get the film from me and have a VCR brought from Dr. Farooq's house, so that he and the family could see it the next evening. Now Suraiya said to me:

"Tell me, is Salman Taseer your son?"

"Yes", I replied.

"He is really your son?"

"Yes."

Then *Sheikh sahib* laughed and said:

"Her son is a rebel."

Coming from *Sheikh sahib* I took such a remark as a compliment!

I very much wanted to photograph him but I didn't have the heart to record him as just having risen from his sick bed. Such photographs anyway came into the magazines. I preferred to remember him by the earlier photos I had taken in 1980 and 1981, especially after Khalida had told me that when the pain from his arthritis was very acute he used to tell her:

"I cannot bear not to be physically active. If the time comes that I become crippled with this arthritis I would rather not be alive."

Nothing pleased *Sheikh sahib* more than to hear compliments about the culture and way of life of his people. One afternoon in July during Ramzan, I went with a friend to the Juma Masjid in Srinagar and was overjoyed to see the main grassy courtyard of the mosque full of people sitting down, groups of men receiving instruction in the Holy Quran from teachers and groups of women and girls from the crowded city *mohallas* just relaxing, while other women were saying their prayers in one or other of the three wide verandahs,

all in the same area. In Muslim shrines in Pakistan and in so many other Muslim countries one sees many women praying, but to actually see them inside the mosque in some hundreds and also praying there in numbers—for me this was something new and when I mentioned to *Sheikh sahib* the same evening how happy I was to see this in the Juma Mosque his face lit up because it was in a way a compliment to him and his new Kashmir, to achieve which he had devoted more than fifty years of his life.

In the summer of 1983 (when alas *Sheikh sahib* was no longer with us) I went for a day trip to Arabal Falls, fifty miles from Srinagar, the highest Falls in the Valley and here again I saw what was for me something new. An excursion trip of boy and girl students of a Jamiat School in Srinagar had come for a picnic to the Falls. When the time came for afternoon prayers they all formed two lines, the boys in front and the girls behind and observed their *namaz* all together by the side of the rushing waters.

On the 24th three separate messengers were sent to me by *Sheikh sahib* to remind me that on my last day, the 25th, I was to come twice to visit, once for an hour in the morning and then in the evening for a quick family supper. By then he could just walk for a short distance with the aid of a stick.

On the 24th there was also an *Eid-ul-Fitr* reception as from the Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, which he himself could not attend, at the Government Emporium Gardens, Sherwani Road and Dr. Farooq Abdullah officiated for him. Ghulam Muhammad Shah, then Minister for Works, was also with Dr. Farooq and all the Ministers and Assembly members. I went there with Begum Zafar Ali, M.L.A. A reporter from "*India Today*" caught up with me in the surging throng at the end of the reception and said he wanted to interview me. I replied:

"Tomorrow is my last day and I am fully engaged."

He said:

"I'll come to see you at your hostess's house the following morning before you leave for the airport."

"Why should you want to interview me?" I asked suspiciously.

"I have some of your husband's poems and I want to ask you some questions."

"Nothing about politics", I emphasised before we were swept apart by the crowd.

Then I had misgivings. Why should he want to interview me? I had better cancel the appointment if it had really been made. Fortunately *Sheikh sahib's* secretary, Om Parkash Gupta was the third person who was sent by him the same evening to remind me that I was to meet him the following morning, so I left in his capable hands the task of informing "*India Today*"'s representative that I would be unable to meet him before leaving Srinagar. I had read enough of interviews in "*India Today*" to be chary of risking one for myself which would of necessity involve other people.

"Certainly you should not be interviewed by him"

was Om Parkash's comment and this was also emphasised by *Sheikh sahib* when we met the next morning for an hour, which was still the longest period he could manage to sit to receive a guest.

Now I thought was the time to make a request for something I wanted very much. I said I had really fallen in love with his beautiful white woollen embroidered "*chogha*" in which I had photographed him in the previous winter in Jammu when I had had dinner with him and *Begumsahiba* and would he please give it to me as a keepsake.

But believe it or not he hastily replied:

"Sorry, but it is not mine, it belongs to Farooq."

In the evening a car arrived from the Chief Minister's house to the residence of my friend, Begum Zafar Ali and by 8-30 p.m. I was in the drawing room. A few women relatives arrived to enquire after *Sheikh sahib's* health and we chatted inconsequently. Suddenly an old man in shabby clothes walked in— a *Sufi*, carrying an empty *kangri* and accompanied by an acolyte. The two daughters, Khalida and Suraiya hurried to the kitchen to arrange for *kulchas* and salted tea for the two of them. When they had eaten and drunk the *Sufi* arose and entered *Sheikh sahib's* room. He left about 15 minutes later. In October when I went for the *chehlum* I asked Khalida what had happened inside. She told me:

"The *Sufi* said a prayer for papa's recovery and my sister and I asked him if he would get better. Confidently he replied: 'Of course'.

Then *Sheikh sahib* laughed and said in English to us two:

"What does he know about it?"

This same *Sufi*, who was from Hazrat Bal, was apparently called by *Begumsahiba* in 1977 when Sheikh Abdullah suffered his first severe heart attack during the strain of the State Elections. He then gave the reply which relieved the minds of all:

"He will recover."

At that time thousands of sheep were sacrificed by people all over the Valley while prayers were said in all the mosques for his recovery.

The *Sufi* gone *Sheikh sahib* came out of his bedroom walking with the aid of a stick and he, *Begumsahiba*, the two daughters, nephew Nazir and I followed him to the dining-room. I was put at the head of the table, with *Sheikh sahib* on my right, *Begumsahiba* on my left, one daughter on each side of the table and nephew Nazir at the other end. We laughed at Khalida's pretending she had eaten earlier when *Sheikh sahib* said:

"She is really dieting, she thinks she is overweight."

We laughed and we joked with all the warmth of a family meal but *Sheikh sahib* mostly smiled and listened to us. Then he arose, cleaned his teeth and washed out his mouth as usual at the dining-room wash basin and we all left the room, he again with the help of his stick. Reaching the door of his bed-room he beckoned to me:

"So you are really leaving tomorrow?"

"Yes" I nodded. Then with a serene smile he proceeded:

"Well, give my love and affectionate regards to all those in Lahore who remember me and especially to"—and we laughingly recited together—

"Mian Amiruddin, Mian Aslam and Mian Salahuddin".

Then he took my hands affectionately and said:

"*Khuda Hafiz*"

with no mention of a further visit to Kashmir when I would be meeting him, as he had always done before.

I was feeling curiously emotionless. I did not understand as to when I would be seeing him again. I did not know it would be never. But he already knew what the doctors had told him and there would be no more meetings, so he had in effect already begun saying his goodbyes to those he knew in this world. And did we but realise it we were also saying goodbye to this kind of leadership, which had played a vital part, served its purpose with the people of that time and was now gone for ever.

Then *Sheikh sahib* entered his bed-room and I rejoined the rest of the family for a few minutes before returning to my hostess's house.

But even then, when time was running out for him he did not forget the mission which at that time was very important to him and for which he was arranging for legislation to be passed in the State Assembly—the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Permit for Resettlement in (or permanent return to) the Jammu and Kashmir State. The Bill, which was originally introduced in 1980 was passed by both the Houses in March, 1982. Before I left he sent Khalida to me with a number of copies of an Urdu pamphlet on this topic to take to Lahore, plus copies of the 18 pages long English translation of the speech he had made in Urdu on August 21st, 1981 in Srinagar, when he had handed over the Chairmanship of the National Conference to his son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, a speech made before an enormous congregation in which he apologised for its length at his age and in his state of health, because of the compulsion of circumstances. I quote him:

"For fifty years I have been working, a major part of my life was spent in this struggle in prison and incarceration. Comrades, these are the times when politics has become a means of achieving personal ambition rather than a way of service to the people. Treachery and trickery and hypocrisy characterise the successful politician today. Things were in sharp contrast in the past when service of the people was thought to be

worship of God. I was schooled that way. The fear of God, love for humanity and compassion for the poor are values that are hard to come by."

"Before we launched our freedom movement Iqbal at the beginning of this century visited Kashmir, when ignorance and poverty was in every home. He prayed God to ignite the flame of revolution and it was in my lifetime that my mind changed to a fire of sacrifice and struggle. From the time when the first martyrs died on 13th July, 1931, I vowed not to rest until I had realised the dream of those martyrs and if necessary lay down my life. My feelings were expressed by the German philosopher, Hermann, who wrote:

'The spirit of freedom and nationalism lies dormant in the soul of man, it dreams of new visions, undergoes emotional upheavals and ultimately bursts forth in the form of revolution.'

"In our struggle we had to go through all the trials and tribulations that face every nation. We offered great sacrifices and achieved splendid victories. We kept our struggle going at all costs, our morale was high and goals bright. We have no regrets for whatever price we had to pay.

"My heart is covered with a myriad of scars except those of contrition. I dared all I could, that is the story of the vigour of my youth."

"I have always accepted the challenges of life. I have used my people with tender care and devoted the best part of my life for their honour."

"The aim of our movement will be fulfilled only when we rise above the regional, sectarian and parochial considerations and strive to raise the standard of life of the common man, improve the living standards of the masses and realise the dream of "Naya Kashmir", which is based on justice, equal opportunity, mutual love and respect, where exploitation is banished and justice will prevail; where economic betterment of people is accompanied by spiritual advancement. Such a welfare state is the goal of all our strivings. We have come a long way on the road towards the goal.

"I am entrusting the Presidentship to Dr. Farooq, the representative of the young generation. I fervently hope he will prove himself worthy of fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of our people and I pray God will give him the strength and the ability to come up to the expectations of the people. Now all our hopes are centred in him, for he is young."

In this same speech Sheikh Abdullah added:

"In 1930 Pandit Motilal Nehru, while handing over the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress to Jawaharlal Nehru, his son, said:

"What the father leaves unfinished could be accomplished by the son."

On October 4th, 1982 in a meeting of the Legislative Assembly the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Permit for Resettlement in (or permanent return to) the Jammu and Kashmir State Bill, originally introduced in 1980 was repassed in its original form. The bill was originally passed by both the Houses in March, 1982 and sent to the Governor for his assent. But he did not give his assent nor return the bill to the House until after the demise of Sheikh Abdullah.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the new Chief Minister declared in the Assembly that he would defer further action on the bill until the Supreme Court gave its opinion about its validity, stating that it was for the President of the Union to refer the bill to the Supreme Court and this he decided to do.

Then in a speech made at a function in Hyderabad, Deccan, on 31-3-83, Dr. Farooq Abdullah said the Bill had now become law.

The next morning I left Srinagar by air for Delhi for a few days and from there wrote a letter of thanks for hospitality and wishes for a quick recovery. At Delhi I found a copy of an editorial in a magazine, "*Mainstream*", in which the editor, Mr. Nikhil Chakraborty had emphasised that Kashmir had a right to get its bill passed permitting those who had left the State against their wishes in and after 1947 to return and have State citizenship. I sent a copy to *Sheikh sahib* in case such a small magazine had not reached him. I also added an anxious note:

"Please, *Sheikh sahib*, obey your doctors and get well quickly. Kashmir needs your guidance."

In reply he wrote on 6-8-82 to Lahore:

"I am going by the advice of my doctors. Sometimes they stretch limits of does and donts too far. However, I am accepting their advice without any murmur."

However, by that time it was too late. He could only perhaps prolong his days until he had finished his final mission, that of ensuring that his son, Dr. Farooq, Abdullah would be accepted as the next Chief Minister.

From Delhi, I travelled to Chandigarh to stay for a few days with friends. There I saw a newspaper report that what the doctors had previously thought was stomach pains and colitis was actually intestinal angina. I asked a doctor friend what it meant and with a sad look he replied:

"It means that the flow of blood from the heart through the arteries to the intestines is insufficient."

"In effect you mean that there is no hope for Sheikh Abdullah?"

He answered regretfully:

"I'm afraid not if this news item is correct"

and I remembered Khalida such a short time ago day after day fruitlessly smoothing her father's feet with a movement towards the heart, conscious that what she was doing was only temporarily putting off the evil day. She told me when I returned to Srinagar in October for the *chehlum* that towards the evening of the 8th, just before he lost consciousness, he said: "My mission is completed."

As Sheikh Abdullah had emphasised in his speech of August 21st, 1981 when he handed over the Presidentship of the National Conference to his eldest son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah and as he also wrote in his message to the "Youth of the Nation" inscribed on the plaque erected behind his grave near Hazrat Bal, Srinagar—he had been the spearhead of the struggle of the first group of leaders of Kashmir fighting for national freedom. Now it was for others to

continue with the struggle and with the even more difficult task of planning for the administration of the ideal of the "New Kashmir". For such planning one needed educated dedicated people and it was expansion of education to which *Sheikh sahib* had attached the greatest importance during the years from 1948 onwards when he had headed the administration of the State and had been instrumental in being the impetus for the opening of so many schools, colleges and universities.

Back in Lahore one could get no regular news, but on the 6th September I received a letter from a *Kashmiri* acquaintance in Rawalpindi that on September 3rd, Delhi heart specialists, including Dr. M. L. Bhatia of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences of New Delhi, had again been called to *Sheikh sahib's* bedside as he had once more suffered a massive heart attack, the second in three months. All day long on the 7th I was acutely depressed and went to bed in this mood. But strange to relate early on the morning of the 8th I awoke with a start out of a dream. I dreamt that I was in *Sheikh sahib's* house in Srinagar. *Begumsahiba* and the two daughters were busily engaged in getting the whole house cleaned and dusted and fresh bed linen put on all the beds. When I asked:

"Why?"

I was told:

"Guests are coming." I said:

"But where is *Sheikh sahib*, I don't see him anywhere?"

The answer was:

"No, *Sheikh sahib* is no longer here."

I was despondent all day and turned on to Delhi's TV World News at their 9.45 p.m. which only reported that Sheikh Abdullah's condition had worsened and doctors were standing by, whereas by that time he had actually already left this world, for he fell into a coma and breathed his last at 7.40 p.m.

Before this happened a number of people had gone to a shrine not far away called Ziarat Dastgir Sahib, to pray for his recovery and Dr. Farooq had accompanied them. While he was still there a

messenger came to call him urgently to his father's bedside. He was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in an emergency Cabinet meeting at Raj Bhawan, Srinagar, just after midnight of that day. This hurried induction as the State's Chief Minister was carried out with the blessings of New Delhi.

The news of Sheikh Abdullah's death was reported in the Pakistan press the following morning, while the B.B.C. had already given the news in a midnight news bulletin of 8th-9th September.

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THE CHEHLUM

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Sher-i-Kashmir, known to his people as *Baba-i-Qoom*, died on September 8th after a three months' struggle against his last heart attack, brought on it is said by yet another helicopter tour to Doda and speechifying. It is said that half a million people followed the cortege to the burial ground near Hazrat Bal, Srinagar and it took nearly eleven hours to reach there, the route according to *Sheikh sahib's* wish, winding past holy places of all the religions of the people of his State. His son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, newly sworn in as Chief Minister, stood on the gun carriage bearing the body for the whole of the journey.

A business man of Anarkali, Sheikh Inayatullah, whose family migrated from Kashmir last century, and an old acquaintance of mine, had secured a visa and gone to Kashmir at the end of August after a gap of forty years, I had given him a prayer I had written for the recovery of *Sheikh sahib*, to recite on my behalf at the Juma Masjid on the first Friday of his arrival there. I had also given him a letter which he delivered, but later the family told me that by that time *Sheikh sahib* had had a recurrence of his heart attack and the letter was read out to him by his wife. Sheikh Inayatullah himself was not in time to meet *Sheikh sahib* before he expired. However, he joined in the mourning prayers at the Polo Ground on the morning of the 10th and went with the *janaza*. He related to me on his return to Lahore how overcome he was to have had that experience:—

"It was far more than any other kind of procession could have been. There were thousands of men, women and children all walking with the procession, beating their breasts and crying out in the agony of their grief at the death of their beloved leader, *Baba-i-Qoom*. As far as the eye could see every housetop, verandah, sidewalk was a mass of people, also weeping and beating their breasts as the *janaza* procession passed along to Hazrat Bal, where the body was laid to rest in its grave and the final prayers said. It was an experience I can never forget."

Early on the morning of the 9th *Sheikh sahib's* body was carried out to a platform in the Polo Ground, where thousands of people filed past to pay their respects and see the face of their beloved leader for the last time. All Government offices in New Delhi were closed for the day in tribute to the *Sheikh*. Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said in a message of condolence to the *Sheikh's* family that Kashmir had lost a father figure and the country a great stalwart. The funeral procession was attended by the Indian Premier, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the President, Sardar Zail Singh, many of the Cabinet members, politicians and other prominent leaders. Special plane flights brought mourners from Delhi. Foreign envoys and more than 250 members of Parliament also joined the procession, which left the Polo Ground after thousands of people had offered the *janaza* prayers early on the morning of the 10th. President Sardar Zail Singh, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and some Central Ministers flew in from Delhi on the evening of the 9th and placed floral wreaths on the body of Sheikh Abdullah and visited the Chief Minister's house to pay their condolences to the bereaved family. It is said that Mrs. Indira Gandhi remarked at the time:

"It would be wonderful if so many people were to follow me to my grave when I die".

Official mourning in the State was for eleven days and all business institutions were closed for five days. Cables, telegrams and letters of condolence received from all over the world ran into many thousands and were still arriving when I reached Srinagar on the 8th and when I left on October 22nd.

I had very much wanted to reach Srinagar in time for the "*qul*" but friends in Lahore said it would be too much of a highly charged emotional scene for a woman going from outside to be involved in and that I had better go for the *chehlum*. This was to be on the 17th October so I left Lahore for Srinagar a week earlier in order to be able to visit individual members of the family beforehand for condolences from myself and on behalf of my husband's family and Lahore friends. The family were very happy that I had come specially from so far away. I was most impressed to find that all of them were already seriously involved in following on with the mission begun by Sher-i-Kashmir, which at the beginning of his dedicated service took the form of the awakening of his people, fighting for their rights, giving them a sense of dignity and selfhood, making them politically conscious, giving them land to cultivate

and above all, education. Khalida, the eldest of the children and the closest to her father, confided in me:

"It was papa's wish that none of us should spend our time grieving for him, that we should accept that his mission had been completed and now it was for all of us, together with others, to consolidate what he had begun. He often told us:

'You will have to learn to live without me'

"But I still don't know how I can bear life without him!"

One of the obituaries in an Indian magazine said of him that if he had not been so much of a committed *Kashmiri* he could have risen to great heights in Indian politics. His name had been mentioned two years before his death as a candidate for Presidentship of the Union, which office he is said to have refused. *A propos* of this I would add that Mr. B. K. Nehru, Governor of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of the University of Kashmir, from the winter of 1980 up to March, 1984, whom I met in Srinagar in the summer of 1983, an eminent political thinker and an authority on international affairs said, at that time:

"I several times suggested to the *Sheikh* that he was doing a great disservice to the country by limiting his activities to this small State. As a man with the enormous prestige of being one of the original leaders of our national struggle it was incumbent upon him to widen his horizons, serve the entire country and try to bring it back to the ideals for which he had fought and which, it was evident, were being eroded everyday. He accepted my line of argument but said that nevertheless he had resolved to limit himself to one part of India. If he could succeed in giving to this small corner a good and honest government and could prevent here the erosion of essential human values he thought that he, at his age, had done enough."

On the evening of the 8th, having booked in at Nedous Hotel I went to see *Begumsahiba* and other members of the family in the adjoining house in which, such a very short time ago, *Sheikh sahib* himself had been. Every part of the paths, the lawns, the offices, his favourite pet dog, Moti, were a reminder of him. The family were about to see a film prepared by the Information Department on the *Sheikh's* visit to Iraq shrines and for Ziarat in 1981, then

Umrah, accompanied by some members of the family, and lastly a film of his funeral, so I joined them. It was decided that the women-folk, accompanied by nephew Nazir and myself should visit *Sheikh sahib's* grave two evenings later, i.e. the 10th. I thought I would be expected to have a prayer ready to recite when I visited his grave and had decided to compose it in English, my mother tongue, so that I could express my feelings most sincerely. I wrote:

"I pray to Allah, the Beneficent that He may shower His Blessings on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and grant him everlasting bliss in His Paradise. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah devoted his life to the service of his people at a time when they needed him most. May Allah Almighty accept this devoted service of His servant and crown his labours with success. I pray that Sheikh Abdullah's son and those on whom the responsibilities of carrying on his work have fallen may walk in his footsteps with Allah Almighty's Help." *Ameen*

Begumsahiba was quite moved by these sentiments and asked for a copy of the prayer for herself.

The photographs which my Lahore friends took of *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba* in their second meeting with them of August 23rd must be the last personal photographs taken of them and their family. In their first visit to *Sheikh sahib* and *Begumsahiba* on arrival in Srinagar round about August 8th *Sheikh sahib* said to them:

"You have already seen all the usual tourist attractions here last summer, so now make a point of seeing all the lesser known places. And do it now because next year I may not be here. If I had been in better health I would have taken you myself."

I kept copies of their photographs for myself for when I was there in July and *Sheikh sahib* had just risen from his sick bed I did not have the heart to take any.

On the 9th morning I visited my friend, Begum Zafar Ali, M.L.A. She told me that for the full three months in the summer while *Sheikh sahib* was ill, all work was at a standstill, everyone was anxiously waiting, waiting. The ministers did not attend office regularly and hardly any work was done. The people must have also understood that by now there was no hope of *Sheikh sahib's* recovery

for Begum Zafar Ali told me that unlike 1977, when State Elections were taking place, *Sheikh sahib* had a heart attack and thousands of sheep were sacrificed and people prayed for the recovery of their Sher-i-Kashmir, now there was only a gloomy atmosphere everywhere. *Sheikh sahib* held five cabinet meetings in his house before he succumbed to his heart attack, in which he told his members that they must remain united. She related that one of these meetings lasted five hours and he sat to the very end in spite of the pleadings of his physician and wife.

In the evening I visited an old student of my husband's, now Head of the English Department of Amar Singh College. His son runs a boarding house and told me that after *Sheikh sahib's* death people were afraid that there might be demonstrations, but peace prevailed and now the tourism trade was picking up. However, on the following morning when I took a walk along the Boulevard up to Nehru Park I saw hundreds of houseboats lined up with "To Let" notices, with names such as "Rose Red", "English Rose", "Crown Prince", "Shalimar", "Switzerland", "King of Kashmir", "Pansy", "Mona Lisa", "Golden Bell". All the *shikaras* were also empty, there were no tourists to be seen.

On the 10th evening we all went to the grave of *Baba-e-Qoom*, near Hazrat Bal, Holy Shrine of the Holy Hair. Emperor Shah Jehan ordered his Governor Fazl Khan to build the original mosque and shrine. On ten selected days of the year connected with some event in the Prophet's life (peace be upon him) including his birthday (*Shab-i-Barat*) pilgrims journey to the *ziarat* and assemble in the paved courtyard stretching out to Nasim Lake to have the Deedar of the sacred Relic, placed in a gold and glass reliquary, exposed to the faithful five times a day. It was a number of years ago that Sheikh Abdullah, along with a band of faithful friends, collected funds to rebuild the Asari-Sherif Hazrat Bal Shrine according to the design and plan of Medina Sharif and its gardens, remodelled and renamed as Gulistan Muhammadi, Gulistan Fatima, Gulistan Siddiq-i-Akbar, etc., thus making it the thing of beauty it now is. Mr. Ghulam Mohyuddin of the "Suffering Moses" handicrafts shop told me that he was one of the band of friends who worked with *Sheikh sahib* to collect funds for this work and he also helped in the redesigning of the new construction. It is said by *Kashmiris* that *Sheikh sahib* personally used to go to the boat people of the Dal Lake and the river to ask for donations for the rebuilding of the shrine at that time. If they said they had no spare money he asked

them to donate one or two of their copper utensils which could be sold for cash. Thus even the poor *Kashmiris* feel that Hazrat Bal Shrine is a part of themselves for they have helped to make it. It is only fit that *Baba-e-Qoom* himself should rest eternally nearby this beautiful shrine.

As we drove along, the clouds in the sky crossing over the moon were reflected in the water of the lake—serene and beautiful. We strewed flowers and petals over the grave and lighted candles before we prayed. Crowds of people who had lined up outside the railings joined with us in our prayers.

The two daughters of *Sheikh sahib*, Khalida and Suraiya, both asked me to spend each evening of my stay with their mother, as they themselves were involved in some duties in their own homes with guests coming for the *chehlum* and they did not want her to be too much alone, as these were difficult days for her. So each evening I walked from the nearby hotel to her house to spend the evening. Their servant, who already knew my tastes, was always ready with a cup of the salted tea which he knew I loved! *Begum-sahiba* and I chatted, the daughters and granddaughters and Dr. Farooq's wife, known as "Molly" used to drop in for a while, we had our dinner, then at 9.00 p.m. a woman whose husband had been killed in the firing by the Dogra army on civilians in 1953 and who had been given education and training for a livelihood by *Begumsahiba*, used to come to spend the night with her and I left at 10.00 p.m. This was our pattern and we became very good friends. However, after eating dinner twice formally in the dining-room as I had done on previous occasions with *Sheikh sahib* present I found I could not bear sitting where he had been until such a short time ago, the Memories were still too vivid, so from then on we ate our dinner in the drawing-room while watching the TV programmes and the servant brought in the *lota* and basin for washing of hands.

I found *Begumsahiba* on closer acquaintance a most mature, intelligent and stimulating woman to meet, with all the politics of the State and of the Union at her finger tips. I became her very close friend. As far as politics were concerned she had considerable acumen. Being naturally intelligent and educated, widely travelled and having been involved for forty-nine years as the partner of an outstanding leader in momentous times, had all developed in her a sense of judgement, political intuition and wisdom.

In a small closed in conservative society like Kashmir where everyone knows everyone else I had heartfelt sympathy for *Madr-i-Meherban* in her unique position. The rural and urban masses of the Valley revere her. They revered Sheikh Abdullah, who raised them from the level of illiterate serfs to people of dignity and now that he is not here they have transferred their adoration to his wife. Wherever she goes outside Srinagar and her route is known, all the way along at every hamlet her car is stopped by the villagers. The men lean in the window to reverently touch her hands or touch her *doputta* and the girls and women stroke her cheeks and kiss her hands and touch her clothes, then hold out their babies for her to touch them also. At one public meeting which I attended with her one man touched the dust where her foot had trod with his hand and from there his own cheek! Some women even pulled at my suit and *doputta* because I had already touched *Begumsahiba*, while sitting in the car!

On October 12th I went with *Begumsahiba* to Ganderbal to the inauguration of a week long camp for female sterilization conducted by the Social Welfare Council in their social work complex, consisting of a two-ward hospital, a school, health centre for women and dispensary. The inauguration was to be by the wife of the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Mrs. B. K. Nehru. The two wards of the hospital were full of completed sterilised cases of women patients who were resting before returning home. The local District Commissioner himself proudly showed us that his own wife was one of the patients.

On October 14th I accompanied *Begumsahiba* to the annual *Urs* of Sheikh Alam Hazrat Sheikh Nooruddin Wali, the patron saint of Kashmir, whose shrine is at Chara-i-Sharif. He is buried in the shrine along with seven of his followers who used to live in a separate dwelling on a nearby hilltop. The building of the shrine is made of intricately carved hewn logs, laced transversely one above the other. Rising in tiers the roof is supported by four pillars. Opposite is another building, also of finely carved wood, three storeys high, where votaries can go to rest.

On this Thursday there were many hundreds of urbanites who had come in buses from Srinagar for the *Urs*, as well as the local peasant population. About 50% of them were women. The whole area was surrounded by the people, even the adjoining hill slopes.

After *Koran Khawani*, for which a special place was made in the enclosure for *Begumsahiba*, a friend and myself, we went outside. The *Imam* came out onto a platform at the top of the shrine and recited to the public the noble deeds of the saint. He held up a clay cup with a hole in the bottom from which the saint is supposed to have eaten. It is said that when his followers pointed out the hole he used to reply that it did not matter for whatever food fell through would be eaten by one or other of God's creatures. Sheikh Noor-uddin's order preached:

"Peace between neighbours and people begins with peace within individuals, combining the delights of solitude with manual labour for the community."

This annual *Urs* has become a regular festival for the people. They come in bus loads from Srinagar. The town is small and some of the houses are perched on the hill top. There are shops full of *halva* and *puris*, fruit, sweetmeats, attractively woven "*kangris*". Everywhere men, women and children throng the stalls while those who are serious go into the shrine to pray at the graves of the saint and his seven votaries. Everywhere the verandahs, courtyards are blocked with crowds of people.

So many magnificent trees we saw more than 100 feet tall. I took a photo of an enormous chinar tree, bright orange red. The woman standing nearby looked a mere pygmy by comparison.

Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, ex-Chief Justice, Azad Kashmir, writes that there is still a chinar tree in the Chinar Garden at Bibijhara laid down by the *Moghuls* which has a circumference of 86 feet at a height of 5 feet from the ground and that Walter R. Lawrence, Settlement Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir State in 1889, reported measuring one chinar tree 127 feet high.

Fully seventeen old associates insisted on having their say—educationists, poets, journalists, the ex-Director of Sericulture, a woman M.L.A., two college Principals, a Sikh political leader, a retired Vice-Chancellor, and so on. All had so much to say and no-one was willing to shorten his speech, so the meeting went on

for 3½ hours. It was extremely cold in that large hall and as *Begum-sahiba* had to give her thanks to everybody at the end of the meeting she had to stay put on the platform in the middle of a long line of seventeen speakers. One old white haired gentleman who, after fifteen minutes of enthusiastic reminiscences had a note passed to him by the Principal to please shorten his speech, very indignantly told the audience:

"No-one can stop me, I will have my say!"

Both before and after the *chehlum* a number of memorial meetings were held in different women's and men's colleges in which old associates of Sheikh Abdullah, political and otherwise, *Dogras*, *Pandits*, Muslims, Sikhs, recalled their memories of their work with him in various fields and of his greatest achievements, which were unanimously agreed as being in the fields of education, health, social uplift and economic betterment. I received the impact of this when one morning I was crossing the river Jhelum in a *shikara*. The boatman was eating his midday meal of boiled rice with chicken. I jokingly remarked:

"I see you are a rich man. You can afford to eat chicken with your rice. When I lived here some years ago a boatman ate spinach with his rice!"

"Ah, but times have changed. Now we can afford to eat chicken with our rice."

On the morning of the 17th, which was the day of the *chehlum*, the family members and I went at 9.00 a.m. to *Sheikh sahib's* grave near to Hazrat Bal. As we drove along the autumn mist was lifting from the serene unruffled surface of the lake, the sky was a pale blue and above the lake were the hazy outlines of the mountains. Towards the right side one could just make out the island of Char Chinar in the middle of the lake and a number of *shikaras* were moving slowly. There is a beautiful grass boulevard with seats running along the side of the lake for about three miles adjacent to the shrine. At its end one comes to the grave of Sher-i-Kashmir, next to an enormous chinar tree, its leaves already tinted an autumn red, with a new sapling at the other side planted not far away. The situation is breathtakingly beautiful.

We had taken garlands and bunches of flowers and a flowered

"chaddar" to spread over the grave. We all said our individual prayers. The headstone of the grave bears a verse in Urdu by Allama Iqbal chosen by Sher-i-Kashmir himself, of which the English rendering is:

"Grieve not if one refuge is lost to you,

There are other places from which you may raise your voice
against tyrants,

You are the eagle soaring in the skies,

And the heaven towards which you can fly has no bounds,

There were times when mine was a lone voice against oppression,

Now many voices have joined mine."

Sheikh Abdullah's devotion to the verses of Iqbal which he always quoted, resulted later in the establishment of the Iqbal Institute in 1978 in Srinagar for research in Iqbal's work and for projecting his aspirations as a poet and thinker to *Kashmiri* youth, the first of such in India.

Beyond the grave is a plaque with two panels in Urdu and one in the middle in English. One in Urdu is a message to young people to continue Sher-i-Kashmir's own struggle to build up the future of their nation. Its English rendering done by an old friend of mine, Malik Wazir Ali, reads:

"The older generation cannot be expected to undertake the toil and struggle required of fighters for freedom. Having lived under alien oppressors for long years they have lost the will to rise. On the other hand youth has vitality and aspirations. Oppressors cannot terrorise them. It is the youth who will lead their nation to freedom and the people will follow their lead. The youth are the most valuable assets of any nation or country. They are the architects of the future. A new age has set in for the youth of Kashmir. Freedom has been won and there are no barriers to what they can achieve. It is up to them now to give flesh and blood to their dreams. This mission calls for constant struggle and hardwork. Therefore, my message to the youth of Kashmir is this: Rest not until you have built a New Kashmir with your own strength and faith in God."

The other panels, one in English, one in Urdu, contain an extract from Sheikh Abdullah's defence statement before the Court of the Sessions Judge, Srinagar, in 1946, before his being sentenced over the "Quit Kashmir" movement, which started on 15th May, Sheikh Abdullah being arrested at Garhi five days after he had initiated his movement and was on the point of proceeding to Delhi on 20th May for consultations with Jawaharlal Nehru and the responsible leaders of the All India States Peoples' Conference.

In an interview I had in Rawalpindi on 25.11.1983 with a *Kashmiri*, Defence Secy. (retd.) of Azad Kashmir, Col. Muhammad Hussain, he told me that in 1946 he was a Captain in the Dogra Army of Maharaja Hari Singh and was posted on duty at Badamibagh Cantonment jail, where *Sheikh sahib* was shifted after his arrest on May 20th, 1946. He related that besides Jawaharlal Nehru, Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, by now a Muslim League member from Lahore and Badshah Abdul Ghaffar Khan also visited Sheikh Abdullah in Badamibagh Cantonment jail. The trial started on or about 21st August and Nehru himself attended two or three of the sessions when the arguments were being given in court.

Sheikh Abdullah was defended by Dr. Asif Ali, a member of the Congress Working Committee and a brilliant Barrister, sent from Delhi by Pandit Nehru, and was assisted by Pandit Jia Lal Killam, an early freedom fighter of Kashmir. It is said that the trial lasted nearly three weeks. Sheikh Abdullah was tried by Mr. Barkat Rai, Sessions Judge, Srinagar, under Section 124-A (Treason) Penal Code. The extract from his defence speech reproduced in English on the plaque behind his grave reads as follows:

"Where law is not based on the will of the people, it can lend itself to the suppression of their aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that law that represents the people's will and secures their well-being and there is the tribunal of human conscience which judges the rulers and the ruled alike by standards which do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To that law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict on the claims I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the 93 million people of all the States of India. That claim has not been confined to the people of a particular race or religion or colour.

It applies to all, for I hold that humanity as a whole is indivisible by such barriers and human rights must always prevail. The fundamental rights of all men and women to live and act as free beings, to make laws and fashion their political, social and economic fabric, so that they may advance the cause of human freedom and progress, are inherent and cannot be denied though they may be suppressed for a while. I hold that sovereignty resides in the people, all relationships, political, social and economic, derive authority from the collective will of the people."

* * * * *

After our return home, all day long *Begumsahiba*, known affectionately as *Madar-i-Meherban*, her children and grandchildren were receiving those who had come for condolence, moving from room to room as required. The menfolk received visitors in the gardens.

As Sheikh Abdullah was the youngest of six brothers and two sisters, of the third wife of his father, their children and grandchildren also made a large number to come for condolence from Saura, a suburb of Srinagar, where in the three-storey family house beautifully carved in wood, in which he grew up. The room in the upper storey where he was born is now kept empty for exhibition to visitors.

Some of the relatives from Saura had just returned from *Haj*, having said good-bye at the beginning of their outward journey to a sick Sheikh Abdullah. Now when they entered for condolence they wanted to pour out their grief, but the two daughters quickly silenced their sobbing, for it had been *Sheikh sahib's* firm order that none should weep for him after his demise but carry on with his mission.

At 5-30 p.m. we women all went again to the grave near Hazrat Bal. We strewed yet more bunches of flowers and petals over the grave and lighted candles before we prayed. One new bridegroom was brought to the grave by his family to receive blessings, "*barkat*". It already seemed that this grave will become a "*Mazar*". Crowds of people who had lined up outside the railings joined with us in our prayers.

It is planned that the present simple grave will be covered with beautiful marble slabs. Round it will be built a complex con-

sisting of an auditorium for meetings, a research library for students, especially of Kashmir history and a museum, in which one room will be a replica of Sher-i-Kashmir's own bedroom in his home, with all his personal effects arranged. The Iraq Government, it was reported at the time I was there, had offered to finance this project but there was feeling that just as several years ago, under the leadership of Sher-i-Kashmir at a time when he was not in office, the people of the State themselves raised the funds for the rebuilding and extension of Hazrat Bal shrine, now in the same way they should be allowed to collect the funds for building this memorial to their leader by their own efforts. In this way it will really be their achievement.

The foundation stone for this complex was laid by *Madar-e-Meherban* on September 8th, 1983, the first death anniversary of Sheikh Abdullah.

On Fridays it is the custom for large numbers of the Muslims of Srinagar to go to Hazrat Bal for their prayers and afterwards they stroll by the lakeside to the grass boulevard, at one end of which is Sheikh Abdullah's grave. So particularly on Fridays one will always find a large number of people there. In the month of August the lakeside is especially beautiful as the whole area is covered with the large pink flowers of the lotus lily.

OM PARKASH CHOPRA

Although I did not get down his interview until the following summer of 1983 the remembrances of Sheikh Abdullah's personal secretary, Om Parkash Gupta, who after five years of devoted service, was with him in his last days right until he went into a coma on September 8th, 1982 from which he did not emerge, should be recorded here.

On August 21st, 1983, I interviewed Sri Om Parkash Gupta, whom I had seen as Sheikh Abdullah's personal secretary in 1980, 1981 and 1982, working devotedly for him for eighteen hours a day. He had been with *Sheikh sahib* for five years, but as he laughingly put it this amounted to eight years of service:

"because I used to work for eighteen hours a day, a very tough job."

I had seen Om Parkash, "Om" as *Sheikh sahib* affectionately called him, in Jammu in the winter and Srinagar for three summers, so we were already good friends. At any time of the day or evening he was on duty and always good tempered and "on the spot", one of the kind of staff members without which a person in a demanding office cannot function—in fact one could not get to see *Sheikh sahib* except through him! He was with *Sheikh sahib* right up to the time of his demise, just before he lost consciousness.

He said:

"A number of people have already asked to interview me about *Sheikh sahib* but it is only to you that I am giving an interview."

Om Parkash continued:

"I was trade agent in Bombay for Jammu and Kashmir Government. *Sheikh sahib* and Shamim Ahmed Shamim came there in 1975. They stayed in the Kashmir Guest House and I was deputed to look after them. I had first seen Sheikh Abdullah in Ramnagar in Jammu, where I was born. I was then a small boy and I remember everybody used to run after him and shout slogans. I thought he was such a genuine person when I saw him in Bombay that it came to my mind that I would like to work for him. At that time he was not in power. In 1974 I was private secretary to Mir Qasim, then Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir and in 1975 *Sheikh sahib* took over from him as Chief Minister.

"To work for Sheikh Abdullah was like living in my own home, I received such love and affection. In 1977 State Elections took place after Governor's rule had been imposed in 1977. In March the Assembly was dissolved. *Sheikh sahib* had to resign and then elections were called for. While *Sheikh sahib* was not actually in office I was appointed a Deputy Secretary, but I was really working for him.

"Electioneering was a very tough fight. We went touring right into the distant areas, I always accompanying him—a very strenuous time—and then he had a heart attack. All the people in the Valley sacrificed thousands of sheep and prayed for his recovery. While he was ill he remained in his own home. I was

in the polling booth on the 6th July while the reports were coming into the house.

"Before the election days Mirza Afzal Beg arranged a huge rally at Golbagh. On the top of the bus he was speaking while a taped recording of *Sheikh sahib*'s voice was being played. So the National Conference won an overwhelming victory. After the elections were won *Sheikh sahib* went to the Polo Ground to deliver a speech to the people.

"Wherever *Sheikh sahib* went I went with him, even when his personal servant did not go. When he was touring he often used to miss his lunch and eat something in the car. I used to keep *channas* in my pocket for him. Sometimes I used to have to remind him about the time for his prayers, but even in a plane or in a car he used to offer them.

"Now in June, 1982 he attended a public function on June 3rd, when he visited the Maulana Azad Government Women's College, Srinagar, which he himself had opened in 1950, along with President N. Sanjiva Reddy."

On June 4th he went to Hazrat Bal and made his last speech there. He is reported to have said:

"Jammu and Kashmir is a Muslim majority state. Was, is and will be a Muslim majority state. In the past it has been endeavoured to turn this Muslim state into a Hindu majority state and even today it is being endeavoured to make it into a Hindu majority."

Sheikh Abdullah quoted:

"When Gulab Singh bought the State from the British, since that time endeavours have been made to make this Muslim majority state into a minority. In earlier days Muslims used to be sent as slaves to Gilgit and Laddakh. When they left their relatives had a foreboding that they would never see them again and the majority of them never returned. Even *jagirs* were given to Jammu *Pandits*, not to Muslims."

On June 5th he went to the airport to see off President Reddy and also visited the then Governor, Mr. B. K. Nehru, who said:

"The doctors had advised him not to take the trip because of the heights involved and I had begged him to pay some regard to his own health. But he said the people were expecting him and he would not let them down. This was typical of the man. He had lived for the people whom he loved and who loved him and no sacrifice was too great for him for ensuring their welfare."

Om Parkash continued:

"On the 6th he left for Doda, a Muslim majority area in Jammu region, accompanied by *Begumsahiba* and Dr. Farooq. He was not feeling well and had developed high blood pressure and the doctor had advised him not to undertake the journey, especially to Laldraman, which is 9,000 feet high, but he insisted because some time earlier he had promised the people of that area to visit them, it being a remote place in Doda district, which even a *Tehsildar* had never visited.

"On the 6th at 8 a.m. the party left for Doda, 4,000 feet high, where he held a long public meeting and *Begumsahiba* and Dr. Farooq also spoke. It was a mammoth public meeting in Doda town, Jammu region. The theme of *Sheikh sahib's* speech was on communal amity and brotherhood. He said:

'Understanding and goodwill between various communities in the State have not only to be preserved but strengthened further so that it may march ahead on the road to progress. These ideals have been the hallmarks of our role which the National Conference have always held in upholding the banner of secularist democracy and that it was those who had played no part in the freedom struggle of the State who were now trying to mislead the people in order to achieve their own selfish ends.' He added:

'The biggest danger to progress was from communalism. It was for this reason that he had been pleading for a determined fight against the extremes of communalism, whether Hindu or Muslim.' He said:

'Our people had always defeated the designs of these elements in the past and would do so in the future.'

"In the same meeting Dr. Farooq Abdullah, then MP and

President, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, emphasised the need for unity and solidarity, while Begum Abdullah asked the women especially to become educated and to send their children to school in order to improve the quality of their lives.

"The whole party slept at Doda and the next day, i.e. the 7th *Sheikh sahib* held a District Board meeting, which lasted all day. On the 8th the party went on to Laldraman, 9,000 feet high. The weight for the helicopter was too much so the cook and *Sheikh sahib's* personal servant, Abdul Ghani, plus their baggage were unloaded. At Laldraman Sheikh Abdullah spoke to the people and told them he would do his best to solve their local problems. From that meeting the party went back direct to Srinagar airport, where *Sheikh sahib* had his lunch and then continued his journey to Hardwara and Dokmula, where he made speeches and then returned to Srinagar. He told the people in all these remote areas that this was probably the last time that he would be meeting them and the emotional audience, many of them seeing him for the first time, cried.

"The party returned to Srinagar on the 8th. On the 8th *Sheikh sahib* went to office, on the 10th he was unwell. On the 13th, 14th, 15th, he went to office. On the 16th he went to office but on the way home he fell into my lap but still insisted he was all right. This was the beginning of his heart attack and from the 16th he did not leave the house to go to office.

"After recovering to some extent in June *Sheikh sahib* held several Cabinet meetings in his house and one meeting in another house. He held a meeting 15 days before his death on September 8th, but otherwise he only went out twice to Hazrat Bal to say his prayers and, in spite of medical advice, for the flag hoisting ceremony on August 15th, for Independence Day.

"I was with him on the 8th September until shortly before he went into the coma from which he did not recover. I cannot forget the period I worked for him. Up to this time I have the impression that he is still living. He had such affection for everybody, especially the under-privileged. Up to the last moment people were ready to die for him. He had a great heart, simple, open and childlike."

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My last day, the 21st, was a very busy one. Dr. Farooq Abdullah was to inaugurate an Annual Fruit Show at Shupyan, a fruit growing area, 50 k.m. from Srinagar.

Previously this annual show had been held in Srinagar, but it was Sheikh Abdullah's decision that such a function should be held in the area which made the greatest contribution to the fruit growing industry of the State.

Dr. Farooq travelled in a jeep and *Begumsahiba* and I followed in a car. All along the route from Srinagar the news had spread that the new Chief Minister was to pass through on his way to Shupyan, so at each hamlet there were crowds of men, women and children, waiting to see him at close quarters, beaming with delight and all trying to shake his hand. On that day he held four public meetings at various places *en route*, thus introducing himself to his people as the son of Sher-i-Kashmir.

At Shupyan Fruit Show we found an impressive display of chestnuts, limes, lemons, apples, walnuts, almonds, with apple jelly and apple juice produced on a commercial scale. There were many varieties of walnuts, some with such delicate shells that they broke at one touch. There were also nearly as many varieties of almonds, some with kernels 1½ inches long, and many varieties of apples. I was happy to learn that the packing of fruit for dispatch from the orchards was done by young women. At the prize giving ceremony for the best entries one young boy received two awards and one young girl one award, for having personally cared for their prize winning entries.

Then we went on to the Government Girls' College at Anantnag (Islamabad) where there was a memorial meeting for Sheikh Abdullah. This college had been opened by *Sheikh sahib* himself. There was an exhibition of photographs of all the inaugurations of projects for which he had been responsible since he was installed as Chief Minister—a long line—industrial complexes, hospitals, universities, colleges, irrigation and hydrel projects and so on. We also heard tape recordings of his recitations from the Holy *Koran*, for he was renowned for his melodious voice from the time he was a young boy.

Before I said goodbye to the family I had asked for something to keep as a remembrance of my husband's old friend. Khalida and Suraiya now gave me a silver pencil with which their father used

to sign his documents and *Begumsahiba* a silver mounted photograph of herself, Sheikh Abdullah and the eldest son, Dr. Farooq, now the new Chief Minister of the State—all smiling happily at a joke.

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SHEIKH ABDULLAH AS EDUCATIONIST

BEGUM ZAFAR ALI, M.L.A.

PANDIT JAYALAL KAUL

On August 2nd, 1983 I was back in Srinagar as the guest of Begum Abdullah, for an indefinite period, but certainly for the first death anniversary of Sheikh Abdullah on September 8th, for which numbers of memorial functions were held, commemoration numbers of books, magazines and journals were issued and *Begumsahiba* herself laid the foundation stone of the complex which was to be built near to the grave of Sher-i-Kashmir close to Hazrat Bal.

In Lahore I had already interviewed a number of old friends or their sons, politicians, administrators, writers, and so on, who had all given me their own views about Sheikh Abdullah.

Mr. L. K. Jha, former Governor of the Jammu and Kashmir State and Chancellor of the University of Kashmir up to 1980 had written in the "Commemoration Volume of the University of Kashmir, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah":

"His interests were wide ranging, but apart from his responsibilities as Chief Minister I felt education was specially dear to his heart. Even before he had come back to power he requested me to arrange a Round Table on Education in which he himself took part and made a very significant contribution. His focus was on making education relevant to the life of students by enabling them to earn a living and to the community by helping in the progress and development of the people."

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Back in Srinagar in August, 1983, I interviewed my friend, Begum Zafar Ali, a former MLA for five years in Sheikh 'Abdullah's National Conference, social worker and educationist, now retired in

Srinagar. She said:

"As early as 1933, when I was only a school teacher Sheikh Abdullah asked me to preside over the first women's meeting in Pather Masjid. He realised from the beginning that women had to be emancipated and an awareness must be created in them so that they could play a role as wives and mothers in nation-building and for this they must be brought out of their dark and dingy houses.

"It will not be out of place to mention here what was the condition of women in general in Kashmir at that time. Their houses were dark and dingy, standing like match boxes in dark, dirty lanes. The women were born in these slums, they lived in them and died in them. Their only function was to cook food, produce children and somehow look after them. They were all always dirty, underfed and underclothed. They were never able to come out of these homes, they were illiterate and ignorant—they simply existed. They had no liberty to enjoy life or have personalities of their own. They had always to obey their elders, whether right or wrong.

"*Sheikh sahib* had heard of my dedication in educational work. He sent a message to me through Mahmuda, herself a teacher, daughter of Maulana Abdullah, that he wanted me to preside over this meeting. It was to be the first women's meeting to be held in Jammu and Kashmir, so I went with Mahmuda to the city.

"There was a huge crowd of women, dirty, half naked. That was an inspiration for me and gave me confidence to talk. When I spoke to them I told them:

'Why don't you take off this useless heavy silver jewellery, learn to wear clean clothes for yourselves and your children.'

I offered to make a women's club for them, teach them to knit and sew and they replied:

'Tell our menfolk to allow us to come to the club.'

Then the women took off their heavy jewellery and threw it at my feet and said:

'Give this to *Sheikh sahib* for his work.'

"That was the first of such meetings over which I presided.

"In 1948 when Sheikh Abdullah had taken over first as Administrator and Education Minister and then as Prime Minister he found the Education Department was in a very bad state. We began to translate the dreams of 1933 at Pather Masjid into a reality. I was then Chief Inspectress of Schools. There were only nine Matriculate Muslim girls in the Education Department. Even Middle School Passes were few in number. I made a chart for *Sheikh sahib* in which I showed that there was one Muslim woman Graduate, nine Matriculates and thirteen Middle School Passes.

"Up to that time there were only two high schools for girls in the Valley. The number of Middle Schools was fourteen and that of Primary Schools only one hundred and twenty-eight.

"Sheikh Abdullah asked me why educated girls from good families such as mine could not come out and work as teachers. I pointed out that it was an economic question, such girls did not need to earn. Those who wanted higher education or training could not afford to go in for this. So at my suggestion nine Muslim Matriculate teachers were sent to College on full pay. Those who then passed in Matriculation were given stipends of Rs. 30.00 per month and sent to College, and Middle Pass girls were given a stipend to continue their education. All those ladies who are now in high posts in education are there because of those early pioneering efforts of Sheikh Abdullah's.

"Because our teachers were not knowledgeable in imparting education to children I started a teachers' club, which met on Saturdays. We had two hundred teachers who used to come to Zenana Park, where there was a Purdah club of which I was the secretary. They used to come at 9-00 a.m. to the Park, learn how to prepare charts, how to tell stories to children, how to teach their subjects, methods of teaching and how to improve the work of their schools. The All India Educational Council came to Srinagar with Mr. Saiyedani as its Secretary. They visited the club and said they must take this original idea to other parts of the country.

"There was a Teachers' Training College in which one place was reserved for a woman, but through *Sheikh sahib* we were able

to get the number of seats increased to twenty. He was so understanding and appreciative that he never said "no" to any suggestion about women's education. He was a great man.

"I also wanted co-education at primary school level as I saw that the boys' schools had better qualified teachers. But when *Sheikh sahib* was arrested in 1953 and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad took over all my pioneer work was stopped. He himself was only an eighth class pass so how could he value education for girls!

"*Sheikh sahib* said to me one day during a discussion on education:

'I wish I had a window in my heart so that you could look inside and see what great love I have for these children.'

"*Sheikh sahib* was a wonderful person, with great trust in humanity. He once told me that his family were shawl merchants and one day he went to neighbouring houses in the area of his family house at Saura and asked why the children were not in school and he was told:

'They are working in your family's business for Rs. 2.00 a month because we need the money.'

"Thus from the beginning he was motivated to feel grieved at the plight of his fellow *Kashmiris* and the urge and dedication to work for their uplift.

"He was committed to women's emancipation through education. He had seen so many *Kashmiris* married to illiterate girls at an early age and abandoning them as they themselves progressed in life. Thus they had to become economically dependent on their relatives.

"It is as a leader of his people in the early days that I remember him best. This was the time of building up, of striving for a better existence for our people. He inspired everyone with whom he came into contact to work with him, especially us women. When he returned to power in 1975 after an absence of nearly twenty-two years things had changed and he was now a politician fighting to keep the identity of his fellow *Kashmiris*.

"Today there are more than six academic Colleges for women, there are two Medical Colleges, an Engineering College, Teachers' Colleges and Home Science Institution, two Universities. The first college for women in the Valley, Maulana Azad, today has 2,500 students and 120 faculty members. Apart from academics women can now qualify in commerce, home sciences, library science, nursing, medicine, teaching and engineering. Most of the large number of working women in the State are the product of these very institutions. Before 1950 an educated woman could find work only as a school teacher.

"It was due to the force of his personality and the reverence in which he was held that he was able to bring about a transformation in the basic attitudes of people. He was like a magnet, pulling into his orbit everyone who came near. Throughout the years even in the remotest districts schools have been opened, most in good buildings. It was because of his care, understanding and affection for the women of Kashmir and their development in education and economic independence that there has been this revolutionary change, for he believed that women, being half of the human race, no society can progress if this half of its members do not have equal opportunities and if they are not given a chance to develop their talents and capabilities."

Begum Zafar Ali finished by adding fervently:

'I really miss *Sheikh sahib* now. How I miss him!'

Mr. B. K. Nehru, Governor of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of the University of Kashmir, 1980-84 talked in the same strain in his article, "*A Personal Memoir*" about Sheikh Abdullah:

"I miss the company of the *Sheikh sahib*. Great men are not born everyday. Those who have the opportunity of seeing them, meeting them and being intimate with them, are greatly privileged and honoured and when, as all mortals do, they pass away the memory remains even more intense with those who had this privilege."¹

* * * * *

Pandit Jayalal Kaul, an educationist, scholar, a member of

various University Boards, a Deputy Director of Education and Principal of Sri Partap College, Srinagar, 1952–57, worked with great dedication with Sheikh Abdullah in the field of education when the latter took over in 1948, first as Chief Administrator and then as Prime Minister of the State.

Pandit Jayalal Kaul was himself awarded a Fellowship of the Jammu and Kashmir State Academy in 1982 by the then Chief Minister, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. He was very happy to talk about *Sheikh sahib*, more especially as he had also known my husband in the 1941–43 period. He said:

“When Dr. Taseer was posted in Sri Partap College although I was serving in Jammu I used to meet him at the house of Mr. Jaffar Ali Khan, who was then Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Education.

“Before 1947 I knew all the National Conference leaders and was sympathetic to their cause—the realisation of self identity for the *Kashmiris*. In 1953 when I was Principal of S. P. College Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, the new Prime Minister, visited the college. The Principal of Amar Singh College had removed the photograph of Sheikh Abdullah from his college hall and I was asked to do the same. But I thought:

‘What opinion of me will my boys have if I do such a thing?’

“So I refused. However, I must say that Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad was a good administrator and very intelligent.

“The only way to take Sheikh Abdullah is as a humanist. He especially had a passion for the higher education of women, he wanted things to happen quickly. Even when he was in jail people had to go on with what he had started. He used to call batches of teachers to ask their difficulties and then utilised their ideas. He learnt by doing. Because of his passion for physical education for youth I took a special interest in trekking and mountaineering in my college and 500 boys at a time used to go trekking in the mountains in the summer months.

“Sheikh Abdullah’s charisma arose from the bold and spirited presentation of his unshakable socio-political convictions, his

sincerity and readiness to suffer for his people. Normally most of us ordinary men and women react to situations and behave in accordance with the set norms of social behaviour of the group or class to which we belong. It is a crisis which shows the man extraordinary and so it was with *Sheikh sahib*. This history making crisis showed him to be more than a man: He was Kashmir’s man of destiny who shaped and moulded a whole people. He had abundant faith in his people, believed in self reliance, which had deep roots in his psyche; it was rooted in his faith and trust in God. He was deeply devout. He had to be for few men are called upon to make such choices, so difficult and so many as he. He was gifted with a voice with a resonance when reciting the Holy *Koran*, which powerfully moved huge congregations at the mosque of Hazrat Bal, Srinagar or secular audiences elsewhere.

“He learnt his politics and nationalism the hard way, not from books and ideologies but from active politics. We would do well to understand the implications of his way of learning by doing if we would rightly understand his politics, their growth and development. It is true that he began his movement in the name of and for the civic rights of the Muslims of Kashmir, who comprised an overwhelmingly large proportion of the population and who were absolutely illiterate, crushed under poverty and very low economic conditions and like dumb driven cattle. But it did not take him long to realise that if his aim and object was the removal of the exploitation of the masses, *kisans* and *mazdoors*, their basic socio-economic problems could not be solved unless power came into the hands of the people themselves.

“On 26th March, 1938 *Sheikh sahib* in his address to the 6th session of the Muslim Conference made a call for unity:

‘We must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing political problems—and we must open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs who, like ourselves believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of irresponsible rule.’

“When he came to power in 1948 what did he do? He gave directions to implement schemes of land to the tiller, liquidation of rural indebtedness, the quick spread of education, including

the education of women, higher education in particular. In just ninety days the first phase of land to the tiller was accomplished; land in excess of the prescribed debt was liquidated with remarkable expedition. The basic daily wage of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour was increased. We now have no bonded labour nor do our fellow-men pull bicycle rickshaws.

"Today the law and order situation here is among the best anywhere in any comparable cities. Young working women can be seen moving about freely even in the far countryside, often alone and unescorted. *Sheikh sahib* had a passion for the spread of education and in only two decades of Kashmir's freedom our position in the higher echelons of women's education is among the best.

"While he was out of office he used his unbounded energy by going round and collecting large funds (which people gave freely to him) for building the new mosque at Hazrat Bal, (Holy Shrine of the Sacred Hair) and the Saura Medical Institute, both memorable non-government achievements symbolising two of his main interests, spiritual well-being of his people and their physical health, the third being education.

"*Sheikh sahib* is the greatest man we have produced during the last millenium. Because of his strength of will and determination, uncommon endurance and patience, bold and unflagging purpose his achievements were great. He was, however, like all of us human and fallible, sometimes prone to vehement outbursts. He succeeded in helping us to retrieve in his oft-repeated phrase, our "*Izzat-o-Abroo*" (honour and dignity).

"There is no one else who led *Kashmiris* as a whole to freedom, who roused us and turned men of common clay into heroes. On the day of his demise a friend of mine asked me:

'What has been your *Sheikh's* achievement?'

"I replied, somewhat irritated:

"Nothing much, only that he merely raised you from a "*hato*" to "*hatahaz*" and "*hazrat*".

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POLITICAL ASSOCIATES OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH

BAKSHI GHULAM MUHAMMAD

To write about Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad who, together with Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, was closest to Sheikh Abdullah in the days of being firstly fighters for the people against the oppression of the *Dogra raj* and then part of the politics of what Sheikh Abdullah hoped would be the "New Kashmir", I thought Prof. Zaffar Naqeeb would be the most suitable as he had worked as a teacher in Amar Singh College right from the early forties, in the very area where all the workers and associates of that time had their offices or shops—Sheikh Abdullah, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, G. M. Sadiq, Ghulam Mohyuddin ("Suffering Moses"), Mirza Afzal Beg, etc. His father-in-law owned the Majestic Hotel at Third Bridge, which had been the meeting place for so many years of the important functions of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, National Conference, etc., and where on October 2nd, 1947 Sheikh Abdullah, newly released from jail held a meeting, along with G. M. Sadiq and Ghulam Mohiuddin Kara, with Dr. M. D. Taseer, sent from Lahore by the Pakistan Government to discuss the future status of Jammu and Kashmir. The same hotel for four years accommodated the four lawyers who worked on the Kashmir Conspiracy Case (1958–63), in which both Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg were accused.

Having lived and spent all his working years in the Valley and being known to me since 1941, I considered that Prof. Zaffar Naqeeb would give me the best all round picture of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and so I met him in August, 1983 at his residence in Rajbagh, Srinagar. He said:

"Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad belonged to Srinagar proper. He was born about 1914. From when he was quite a young boy he was interested in politics and he was one of those students who left their studies because of the Kashmir Freedom Movement and also perhaps because he came from a poor family in Srinagar city. His father was a tailor and his mother had to

work in other people's houses in order to supplement the family income. He was one of four brothers, all now dead.

"He was in the Congress movement in the subcontinent in 1927. Being young he was treated as an errand boy by the older workers. When the Muslim agitation movement began in 1931 he was one of Sheikh Abdullah's volunteers. He was only 16-17 years of age then but he was in charge of the Volunteer Corps and took an active part in organising public meetings, processions and the pasting of posters on walls at night. Another faithful worker of that time was Abdul Majid Qarshi of Jammu.

"Sheikh Abdullah encouraged Bakshi in every respect because he was a daring youngster, who used to fight with the police, used to organise *goonda* parties, as he understood the mentality of the masses from which he came.

"He joined the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and during the Ahrar movement in Kashmir of 1932 he was with the Ahrars and not with the Ahmedia movement.

"He was arrested many times between 1931 and 1938. In order to overcome his financial difficulties he joined the Khadi Bhandar as a *munshi* but he spent most of his time in organising the National Conference movement throughout the Kashmir Valley. It was on 28-6-38 that the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference adopted a resolution for recommending to the General Council that in the forthcoming session of the Conference the name should be changed to Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Both Bakshi and Afzal Beg first opposed, but after some hours of discussion agreed that the resolution should be adopted. Bakshi then became a member of the Working Committee.

"In October, 1941 when Sheikh Abdullah performed the '*nikah*' of Faiz Ahmed Faiz with the sister of Dr. Taseer's wife, in Srinagar, where Dr. Taseer had been appointed Principal of Sri Partap College, Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq was one of the signatories to the '*nikahnama*'. My uncle, Prof. Mahmud, whose father-in-law was the owner of the Majestic Hotel, was also present in the marriage, along with Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad.

"It is a fact that Bakshi was the right hand man of Sheikh Abdullah. He was a selfless man early in his political career until he took over as Deputy Prime Minister in 1948. Bakshi sacrificed even more than Sheikh Abdullah in the early years in terms of harassment because he was beaten so many times in jail by the police. Many people finally tried to separate him from Sheikh Abdullah but this happened only in 1953.

"Bakshi tried his best in 1944 to convince Sheikh Abdullah to co-operate with the All India Muslim League but at that time Sheikh Abdullah was surrounded by people like G. M. Sadiq, D. P. Dhar and other Leftist members of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and at that time he, Bakshi, was considered a Rightist member. In 1944 when Quaid-i-Azam came to Kashmir, Bakshi was one of those who tried his best for a reconciliation between Quaid-i-Azam and Sheikh Abdullah, i.e. All India Muslim League and Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, but Sheikh Abdullah was much influenced by Congress at that time so the attempt was a failure.

"In the early years before 1946, when Bakshi fled out of the State along with G. M. Sadiq and D. P. Dhar at the start of the Quit Kashmir movement, he used to be with Sheikh Abdullah during all his speeches made in Srinagar. *Sheikh sahib* used to speak here in Urdu, while Bakshi translated the import into *Kashmiri*. In this way a wider audience was reached. He also assisted in this manner in the first year or two after Independence, when there was great dislocation of the population because of riots in Jammu region, the Muslim population fleeing to Pakistan and internal skirmishes between the Indian and Pakistan Armies.

"In 1946 when the Quit Kashmir movement was launched Bakshi, along with G. M. Sadiq and D. P. Dhar escaped from Srinagar and came to Lahore. He then organised the Quit Kashmir movement throughout India, published pamphlets and books against the *Dogra raj*. In Lahore especially he was encouraged in fighting against the *Maharaja's* government by Dr. M. D. Taseer, Hafeez Jullundhri, Maulana Abdul Majid Salik of "*Inquilab*", Maulana Ghulam Rasool Meher and Prof. Ilmuddin Salik (as related in his book, "*Kashmir Chordo*" by G. M. Sadiq). It is a fact that Dr. Taseer personally liked Bakshi more than any other *Kashmiri* leader of that period for being

what he was, a man of the people with all the weaknesses and strengths of the poor man of the *mohalla*.

"Bakshi was especially useful to Sheikh Abdullah because he could control the urban masses, having come from them, especially the *tonga*-drivers and boatmen, of whose unions he became President. In the same way Mirza Afzal Beg was useful to Sheikh Abdullah because he represented the rural areas. Bakshi was ready to go to jail when required along with others and by sheer dogged hard work he rose and became accepted as a worker. Because of his native intelligence he by-passed many others and came up to place No. 2 with Sheikh Abdullah by 1947.

"After Sheikh Abdullah was released from jail on September 29th, 1947 he sent both Bakshi and Sadiq to Lahore for discussions about the future of Kashmir. They were unsuccessful and returned, due to the beginning of the Azad Kashmir movement.

"In 1947 when Sheikh Abdullah took over in November as Administrator of the State Bakshi was his Deputy and it was he who was responsible for maintaining peace in the Valley. He organised a corps of 6,000 National Militia, and drew his volunteers from the Valley. Ghulam Mohiuddin Kara was his assistant. He dissolved the RSS and sent them out of the Valley. In this way he saved the Valley from communal riots.

"The Indian States were under Sardar Patel and he was not convinced with the policy of Nehru regarding Jammu and Kashmir State. It is said that Patel made an offer to Pakistan to exchange Hyderabad with Kashmir. The move was not appreciated by some of the leaders of the time in Pakistan.

"In Kashmir politics Sheikh Abdullah was closely in touch with the Nehru family and he by-passed the policy of Sardar Patel. He convinced Nehru about the special status of Jammu and Kashmir while Patel thought that if special status was given to Jammu and Kashmir then it had to be given to other States also. For this reason Patel very diplomatically snatched Bakshi away from Sheikh Abdullah secretly. This was in 1948 when Bakshi was then with Congress.

"This was how Bakshi developed a special relationship with Sardar Patel and Karan Singh in 1949-50 and also organised a group in the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference consisting of Sham Lal Saraf, G. M. Sadiq, D. P. Dhar and others. In 1952 the movement was started by Parja Parshad for the full accession of Jammu and Kashmir State with India and that movement was crushed by Sheikh Abdullah. Then he began to associate with foreign powers with the idea that Kashmir should be separate and independent. At that time Bakshi was deeply committed with India. According to the plan of Dr. Karan Singh (at that time *Sardar-i-Rayasat*) on 9th August, 1953 Sheikh Abdullah was overthrown and was arrested while with *Begumsahiba* at Gulmarg and imprisoned without trial."

Bakshi ruled Kashmir from 1953-64 when he was deposed, due to his corruption and independent stand against India. After he had deposed Sheikh Abdullah in 1953, as Prime Minister he received a great deal of funds from the Union Government, who thought he would toe the line as Sheikh Abdullah had not. The positive things he did with the funds he received were that the Medical and Engineering Colleges and the Polytechnic College were opened by him. He built Zero Bridge, Badshah Bridge and one other, Cement Bridge. He made the Secretariat Building. He built the road from Tarnmarg up to Gulmarg, developed Pahalgam for tourism and also Cheshma Shahi. In Jammu he built new colonies for the Government officials who spent six months of the year there. He formed in 1958 the Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages in Srinagar, of which he was the first Chairman. He also made it a point to try to provide employment to Muslims. He gave free saplings to the rural population. All this earned him the name of "Bakshi the Builder". It was during his regime that education up to Post-Graduate level was made free.

He never bothered about his own security and people appreciated this aspect of his. He was one with the common people because he had come from them and he understood their mentality. Everyone used to be allowed to meet him. During Bakshi's regime most of the contractors and officials of the Irrigation Department constructing canals were his relatives and friends. The Indian Government became very disillusioned with him and Congress made a plan to remove him. At that time Kamaraj was the President of the Congress. There was a resolution of the Indian Congress Committee that those who were holding office in Congress and Government

should resign. In this way Bakshi also resigned and his resignation was accepted in 1964. He nominated his own man, Shamsuddin in his place but he was soon replaced by G. M. Sadiq as Prime Minister.

Then there was the Ayyangar Commission which was set up by the Indian Government to enquire into Bakshi's corruption and other affairs, and Bakshi, instead of facing the Commission decided that resignation was preferable. During Bakshi's period his brothers and sons were all in politics. All made money. One was Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Bakshi Rashid. Bakshi himself died in 1975.

MIRZA MUHAMMAD AFZAL BEG

Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, along with Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad was the closest of the political associates of Sheikh Abdullah and the most valued in the days when the *Kashmiris* were fighting against the oppression of the *Dogra raj*—Bakshi, an uneducated Srinagarite, coming from the urban masses whom he knew how to handle and Afzal Beg, with an M.A. from Lahore and LL.B. from Aligarh, representing the rural masses of the Valley, as he belonged to Anantnag. Bakshi betrayed Sheikh Abdullah in 1953 and replaced him as Prime Minister of the State after he was arrested but Afzal Beg remained close to him, even with some political differences, almost up to the time of his death.

Before 1947 Afzal Beg was first a member of the Muslim Conference, then the National Conference, a Member of the Kashmir Assembly, Deputy Leader of the National Conference Assembly Party, then Minister for Works and Development. From 1948–53, when Sheikh Abdullah was Prime Minister of held Jammu and Kashmir, he was Revenue Minister, then when *Sheikh sahib* returned to power in 1977 he was Deputy Chief Minister in his Cabinet. It was Mirza Afzal Beg whom Sheikh Abdullah chose as a member of the delegation he took with him in May, 1964 to Pakistan after his release from jail, for negotiations with the Pakistan Government over the Kashmir dispute, it was he who accompanied Sheikh Abdullah and his wife in 1965, when the three went for *Haj* to Saudi Arabia and then visited a number of other countries, including U.K., U.A.R., France and Algeria.

In 1946, he, along with many others, had been arrested with Sheikh Abdullah in the Quit Kashmir movement and was released in 1947. Before arrest he worked in the movement in collaboration with G. M. Kara, the former from Srinagar and he from Anantnag. On 2nd October, 1947 after Sheikh Abdullah's release from jail he was present in the Majestic Hotel, Srinagar meeting of the former with Dr. Taseer, who had been sent from Lahore for discussions on Kashmir's future. On October 20th he went to Delhi together with Sheikh Abdullah and G. M. Kara, at the invitation of Jawaharlal Nehru, where they were joined by G. M. Sadiq after his fruitless mission to Lahore for discussions.

In Srinagar in the summer of 1984 I interviewed Mirza Afzal Beg's son, Mirza Dr. Mehboob Beg, who had been elected from

Anantnag in the 1983 State Elections on a National Conference ticket and he continued the story of his father. He said:

"I was only four years' old when my father was arrested in 1953 along with Sheikh Abdullah and others. From 1946-47, then 1953-55, when he was released for a while on grounds of ill health and then 1957-64 he was in jail until the Kashmir Conspiracy case was finished.

When he was released from jail on parole in 1955 on grounds of ill health Afzal Beg formed the Plebiscite Front, along with hundreds of Sheikh Abdullah's supporters. They demanded a free and fair Plebiscite to solve the Accession dispute and also pledged to work for the right of self-determination of the *Kashmiris*. In the Parliamentary Elections of March, 1971, the Plebiscite Front, which Sheikh Abdullah had also joined on his release from jail in 1958, was outlawed and its members were debarred from elections. Mirza Afzal Beg, its Chief and Sheikh Abdullah were exiled from the State in January, 1971.

Dr. Mehboob Beg continued:

"My father was again arrested in 1957 and released with Sheikh Abdullah in 1964. He was also arrested in 1965 during the Indo-Pakistan War, on his return from accompanying Sheikh Abdullah and his wife for *Haj* and a political tour of various countries. He was always either externed in Delhi or he was in jail in various places so I really did not get to know him at home until 1967 when I was 18 years of age. It was difficult to visit him in all the jails in which he was incarcerated. Thus until I grew up you could say I hardly had a father. Out of all his children, I was the only one who could talk freely with him. This began when I was nominated for a seat in Indore Medical College as a student.

"My mother wanted me to become a doctor for I had never seen my father in a fit condition. He had diabetes, high blood pressure and kidney trouble and actually he was released from jail in 1955 on parole on the grounds of ill health. I studied Psychiatry in Srinagar Medical College, after obtaining my M.B.,B.S. from Indore, then I took up a Government job in Srinagar. In 1981 I resigned and decided to go into politics. I stood from Anantnag, my home town in the 1983 Elections on

a National Conference ticket and was elected especially because I was the son of Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg.

"For three years, 1972-75, it was my father who negotiated as representative on behalf of Sheikh Abdullah with Mrs. Indira Gandhi's representative, Mr. G. S. Parthasarathi, for the terms of the Kashmir Accord, as a result of which Sheikh Abdullah came back into power as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, taking over from Mir Qasim, in 1975, until his demise in 1982.

"It was my father who, along with Begum Abdullah, managed the State Elections of 1977 against the Janata Party after Sheikh Abdullah suffered a heart attack. He fought in the 1977 Elections himself, won his seat and in Sheikh Abdullah's Cabinet was made Deputy Chief Minister. My father worked for forty-five years in all with Sheikh Abdullah, so it was a great sorrow to him when my father died in 1981 in Srinagar and it was Dr. Farooq Abdullah who took his body back to his home town, Anantnag.

"I personally think that one should choose either politics or family life. It is my belief that one cannot mix both."

Mirza Afzal Beg was short in stature, but a brilliant writer, orator in English, Urdu and *Kashmiri* and sometimes it was said that he was the brains behind Sheikh Abdullah. Indira Gandhi considered that Sheikh Abdullah and Beg together were strong. If Congress could divide them then the National Conference party would be weakened. So she manipulated from the Centre through G. M. Shah so that Afzal Beg and Sheikh Abdullah should fall out because it was known that the people of the Valley considered him as the person who would naturally follow on as Chief Minister of the State after Sheikh Abdullah, he being acceptable to all. G. M. Shah was responsible for separating these two great friends, for he really wanted the post of Chief Ministership for himself, so he started his intrigues. Thus although until a year or two before his death in 1981 Beg was with *Sheikh sahib*, because of false rumours emanating from Delhi about his relationships with people there, in 1978 he was forced to resign as Deputy Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir.

When Sheikh Abdullah understood that G. M. Shah was the man behind the intrigue for the separation of him and Afzal Beg he

decided to build up his own son as a neutral man to succeed him, one who would be acceptable to all parts of the State and not only the Valley.

Thus with the death of Afzal Beg in 1981 after some years of poor health and Sheikh Abdullah himself handing over the Chairmanship of the National Conference in August, 1981 to his son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah on the grounds of his advanced years and declining health it was a foregone conclusion that Dr. Farooq Abdullah should be considered the most suitable next candidate for Chief Ministership.

Sheikh Abdullah was a great humanist. Mirza Afzal Beg is but one of the examples of generosity of heart which *Sheikh sahib* showed in his behaviour towards those who were political associates but who then had differences which made them adversaries.

When Beg, who had had indifferent health for years, finally fell so ill that he had to be hospitalised for some time in Srinagar it was Sheikh Abdullah who made the arrangements and visited him frequently, and when in June, 1982 he succumbed to this final illness it was Dr. Farooq who took the body to his home town, Anantnag for the *janaza*, which *Sheikh sahib* also attended.

Similarly Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas of Jammu, who became so bitter about the changing of Muslim Conference to National Conference in 1938 and then again started the Muslim Conference, did not meet Sheikh Abdullah from 1940 onwards until Quaid-i-Azam came to Srinagar in 1944 and tried to resolve their differences, as had so many others. Yet when Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was jailed by the *Maharaja* in 1946 it was Sheikh Abdullah in the United Nations meeting on the Kashmir question at New York in January, 1948, who requested his old class-fellow, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, then a member of the Pakistan delegation, to arrange for Abbas' release from jail and repatriation to Pakistan.

KHAWAJA GHULAM MUHAMMAD SADIQ

Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz was always a great friend of Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq from the time he himself used to go to Kashmir for summer vacations from 1936 onwards and still used to meet him in Delhi, even after they had been separated by the events of 1947. This was when Faiz used to go there for *mushairas*. When Faiz sahib met me in Lahore in October, 1984 he said of Sadiq:

"He belonged to a well-to-do family of Jammu and Kashmir, but he was always a very simple person, both when he was in Bakshi's Cabinet and when he was himself Prime Minister. He was always loyal to his friends and held fast to his own beliefs. He was one of the few educated persons in the politics of those days and had a cultured way of speaking and behaving. He was a man of modern ideas and rational thinking, who read widely, especially progressive literature. He was never an opportunist. He was not a good organiser or a charismatic leader as he was not assertive, but he was an intelligent leader."

He must have been a great contrast after a Prime Minister of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad's type!

In Faiz's opinion the two parts of Jammu and Kashmir must ultimately come together again and the solution should be that the State should be an autonomous principality, run on the same lines as Monaco, which depends upon the tourism industry for its livelihood and is also landlocked like Jammu and Kashmir, but has a convention of mutual administrative assistance with France and other neighbours concerning customs, taxes, etc.

Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq received his higher education in Lahore and Aligarh. From his student days in Lahore he was motivated to be a Leftist, as were a number of other young Kashmiris, by association with B. P. L. Bedi and his wife, Freda, both dedicated Marxists and continued to hold the same political convictions for his all too short life, for he had a chronic kidney complaint for a number of years, which was ultimately the cause of his demise.

Sadiq joined the Kashmir Freedom Movement in 1931 to work with Sheikh Abdullah and was a member of the Working Committee of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1933.

In 1934 when the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly was formed, polling took place on September 3rd and Sadiq was elected as a member from the Valley. Its first session was on 17th October, after which Sheikh Abdullah left for the plains, where he met and was much influenced by Jawaharlal Nehru.

In India it was only after the 1935 Act was passed by the British Government that elections were held.

On August 5th, 1938 a Responsible Government Day was observed in the Valley, then a manifesto was drafted on August 29th demanding "Changes in the basic principles underlying the present system of Government" and signed by twelve prominent Muslim, Hindu and Sikh leaders. All the signatories to the document, Sheikh Abdullah, G. M. Sadiq, Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi, Mian Ahmad Yar, Mirza Afzal Beg, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz and four other Hindus and one Sikh, Sardar Budh Singh, offered themselves for arrest. They received six months. This Manifesto paved the way for the conversion of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference into Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

Before this on June 28th in the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference Sheikh Abdullah had placed a resolution recommending to the General Council that in the forthcoming session of the Muslim Conference the name and constitution of the organisation be so altered and amended that all such people who desire to participate in the political struggle become members irrespective of their caste, creed or religion. Much later in an interview with Nagin Bazaz, son of Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz in July, 1981, in Srinagar he said to him:

"Until the conversion of the Muslim Conference into National Conference in 1939 the State belonged either to *Dogras* or to *Kashmiri Pandits* by way of lands, services and privileges. The Muslims were nowhere."¹

A special session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was held at Srinagar on the 10th and 11th June, 1939 under the presidentship of G. M. Sadiq, which was attended by all the prominent leaders and workers of the Party. 187 delegates from all over the State were present including Sheikh Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg, Maulana Saeed Masoodi, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Mian Ahmad

Yar, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Chaudhry Hamidullah. Maulana Masoodi as Chairman of the Reception Committee introduced a resolution approving the Working Committee Resolution No. 5 of 28th June, 1938, for the change of the name of the Conference and for bringing about the necessary amendments and changes in its Constitution, as confirmed by the General Council in its session held on the 27th April, 1939. Now the Conference would be named All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. In his Presidential address Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq said:

"Any responsible Government cannot be the Government of any particular class or party or religious group but, on the other hand, every individual amongst the forty lac inhabitants of the State will be a component part of the same and will have the same share in running it; it is, therefore, essential that in the struggle for the attainment of responsible Government every adult citizen of the State, irrespective of religion or race, should be able to participate and make his contribution; for channeling these sacrifices and conducting the Movement in an orderly manner, a common platform in the shape of a single Organisation is the first important step."²

Sadiq was then a member of the Working Committee of the National Conference and mostly associated with Sheikh Abdullah. He was one of the group which compiled the text of the "New Kashmir" document, prepared in Lahore under the leadership of the *Bedis* and finally printed in 1944 in English and Urdu.

In 1939 Sadiq, then a member of the State Legislative Assembly from Srinagar was indoctrinated by leading visiting Indian communists such as P. C. Joshi, Fazl Ilahi Qurban, the *Bedis*, and made efforts to influence students and labour but not to form a separate State Communist Party. They distributed the Party organ "People's War". Sheikh Abdullah expressed his disagreement of the line of the *Bedis* and G. M. Sadiq and then their influence was less, but by 1942 Sadiq, along with D. P. Dhar, Girdhari Lal Dogra and G. M. Kara had been won over to the Communist line.

In October, 1941, Sadiq was one of the signatories to the '*nikahnama*' of his friend, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, whose '*nikah*' was performed in Srinagar by Sheikh Abdullah.

On July 14th, 1943 the *Maharaja* set up a committee for a

Royal Commission of Inquiry headed by Chief Justice Ganga Nath. Out of 20 members only 6 were Muslims, of whom G. M. Sadiq and Mirza Afzal Beg were from the National Conference. The Committee was formed to review grievances of the State people. However, the National Conference boycotted the meetings after they had started on 19th August as in their opinion nothing concrete was being decided.

Sadiq was one of the group which met Quaid-i-Azam for discussions during his visit to Kashmir in the summer of 1944 and participated in all the functions held for him, including the Aligarh Old Students' Function. Beforehand he and Maulana Masudi went to Delhi to meet Quaid-i-Azam to extend an invitation to him on behalf of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

In the 1945 State Elections, Sadiq was again elected as Deputy Leader of the National Conference Assembly Party.

Sadiq participated in the Quit Kashmir movement, to which the Indian Congress gave their support and in 1946, when Sheikh Abdullah was arrested he, together with Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and D. P. Dhar escaped to Lahore. They had to remain outside the State until August 14th, 1947. From Lahore they worked for the movement. The Punjab press gave them full support but Sadiq was bitter about the lack of co-operation extended to them from the Muslim League.

"*Pakistan Times*", Lahore of 2-9-47 reports that on September 1st Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad left New Delhi for Kashmir, "where he will meet Sheikh Abdullah in jail, as his ban on entry into the State has now been removed".

Sheikh Abdullah was released from Badami Bagh on September 29th, where he had been brought two weeks earlier from Bhadrawah jail, released according to an understanding between the *Maharaja* and the Indian Congress, as reported by "*Pakistan Times*", Lahore of 30-9-47.

In an interview on March 14th 1983 at his residence in Lahore with Mr. Muhammad Yousuf Taing, Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Languages Academy, Srinagar, Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz related that after Sheikh Abdullah's release from jail on September 29th, 1947 Dr. Taseer, who had been close to the *Sheikh* since his student days

in Lahore, was deputed by Muslim League leaders of Lahore to go to Srinagar on October 1st, and meet him. When he returned he brought with him Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, a member of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Working Committee. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad had already left for Lahore.

The same evening after his return to Lahore Dr. Taseer met Faiz and reported that the *Sheikh* had told him:

"If Pakistan guarantees the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir State and accession in only three subjects—Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, we will have no hesitation in beginning negotiations."

Faiz is reported to have told Mr. Yousuf Taing that Sadiq was sent instead of other more seasoned political associates of Sheikh Abdullah's because he was a Leftist and at that time Leftists generally were supporting Pakistan and the concept of self-determination. The *Sheikh's* calculation was that because of Sadiq's Leftist contacts he would be the most appropriate emissary.

When Mr. Yousuf Taing asked if Sheikh Abdullah himself was a socialist Faiz replied thoughtfully:

"On a doctrine level Sheikh Abdullah certainly was not an authentic socialist, but as an idealist he was in tune with the socialist thinking of the day and then he had colleagues like Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, who certainly was a clear-headed socialist."

* * * * *

Faiz continued:

"As soon as Sadiq reached Lahore he began to talk to *Pakistani* leaders. We people helped him and he began to strike responsive cords in a section of the *Pakistani* leadership. But before Sadiq could get to meet Jinnah tribal raiders invaded Kashmir. When this news reached us in Lahore we could see that everything was lost. As Chief Editor of "*Pakistan Times*", Lahore, I wrote a signed editorial under the caption "*Conspiracy in Kashmir*" and hinted clearly whose handiwork it was. Now things advanced swiftly, Sadiq's dialogue had become irrelevant and

with our efforts he managed to get a seat on what was probably the last Delhi bound aircraft for some time."

According to Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi, this was October 22nd, as reported in "*Weekly Azad Kashmir*", dated 4-10-59.

"There ended the opportunity of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan through the leaders of public opinion there—the rest is History," said Faiz.

The complete interview concerning mostly the 1947 period when Khawaja G. M. Sadiq was sent to Lahore by Sheikh Abdullah with Dr. M. D. Taseer to conduct negotiations with Muslim League leaders, was published in Urdu in the Sher-i-Kashmir memorial annual number, September, 1984, of "*Shiraza*", Srinagar and reproduced in part after the demise of Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz in November, 1984 by "*Kashmir Times*", Jammu in English.

As quoted by Justice M. Y. Saraf in his book and also by Mr. Kalim Akhtar in his biography of Sheikh Abdullah, Mr. Abdul Majid Qarshi, one of the earliest political workers in the State wrote in the "*Weekly Azad Kashmir*" on 4th October, 1959:—

"On the 18th October, 1947 I received a message from Maulvi Muhammad Saeed Masudi at Amira Kadal, Srinagar, that Sheikh Abdullah had ordered me to leave for Lahore immediately in order to take part in the negotiations that were already going on there between Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq and the Muslim League Government. I was also told that Sheikh Abdullah wanted me to ensure that the talks were not broken under any circumstances."

He reached Sialkot on 20th October and then adds:

"On the 22nd October when I was preparing to leave for Lahore news came that tribesmen were about to enter Muzaffarabad in aid of the Muslims of Kashmir. I reached Lahore on the 22nd October but an hour before my arrival Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq and his companions had, on hearing of the tribesmen's entry, flown to Delhi."³

"*Pakistan Times*", Lahore, 21-10-47 reports that on October 20th Sheikh Abdullah in New Delhi met Gandhi and attended his

prayer meeting. He was to return to Kashmir on 22nd October. . . "*Pakistan Times*" further reports, 28-10-47, that on October 27th Sheikh Abdullah left Delhi for Srinagar and said he had come to Delhi for just a few hours.

Justice Saraf comments:

"One thing is now clearly established that Sheikh Abdullah's representative was still holding negotiations with the Pakistan Government on the Pakistan soil and the idea was to pave the way for his leader's visit to Karachi, when tribesmen entered the State."⁴

As nothing could be resolved over the future of Kashmir, Sadiq left for Delhi to join Sheikh Abdullah, who had already arrived there, along with D. P. Dhar and G. M. Kara at the invitation of Pandit Nehru, for discussions.

In 1949 Sadiq was Vice-President of the India Peace Conference and was reported as saying:

"Whichever dominion helped the cause of the New Kashmir we would affiliate with that."

He was also the first President of the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly formed in 1949 by Sheikh Abdullah. While he was with Sheikh Abdullah he was always a very strong and active member of the Working Committee of the National Conference.

In 1953, Sadiq along with G. L. Dogra, D. P. Dhar and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad conspired to overthrow Sheikh Abdullah. At that time Sadiq was President of the Constituent Assembly, 1950–55. It must have been a bitter blow to Sheikh Abdullah that four of his most trusted lieutenants were the prime motivators in planning his arrest. Only two or three Indian politicians, such as J. P. Narain, Miridulla Sarabhai, Pandit Lakhanpal, protested on Sheikh Abdullah's behalf. The Leftists were against him because they considered he was playing the game of the Americans, having met U. S. statesmen in Srinagar and was said to be intriguing for an independent Kashmir.

However, having been confirmed Leftists since their student days, Sadiq, D. P. Dhar and G. L. Dogra would have had to go

along with the line of the Communist Party of India, which had changed now that they had realised that the Western Powers, particularly the U.S.A., were encouraging Sheikh Abdullah in his wish for an independent Kashmir. He had met Roy Henderson, U. S. Ambassador to India in Srinagar in September, 1950 and now, from 1st-3rd May, 1953 the U.S. statesman, Adlai Stevenson, held meetings with him in Srinagar. Earlier in August, 1953 in "*Manchester Guardian*" (London), as quoted by Rita Chawdhary, Adlai Stevenson had publicly stated:

"The best status for Kashmir could be independence both from India and Pakistan."⁵

Even earlier on 8th May, 1952 the "*Times*", London wrote:

"The *Sheikh* has made it clear that he is as much opposed to the domination of India as to subjugation by Pakistan. He claims sovereign authority for the Kashmir Constituent Assembly, without limitation by the Constitution of India and this stand has a strong appeal to Kashmir on both sides of the Cease-Fire Line and if this movement of purely Kashmir nationalism was to gain ground it might well oblige India, Pakistan and U.N. to modify their views about what ought to be done next."⁶

As by now the C. P. I.'s earlier suspicions about Sheikh Abdullah's role were confirmed, its national committee passed a resolution on August 1st, 1953 which viewed with:

"grave concern reports from Kashmir that some leading personalities of the Sheikh Abdullah group and its supporters have made public declarations that the State of Kashmir should be independent of India."⁷

The policy of the C. P. I., which had previously supported the "right of self-determination of the idea of national minorities" now became a supporter of the idea of the indissolubility of the Indian State.

Therefore, as between May and August, 1953 Sheikh Abdullah had given enough indication of his stance on the issue of his State's continued accession to India the C. P. I. had no alternative but to lend support to the plan for his removal from office through its Kashmir members.

It may also be noted that in Srinagar, according to Balraj Puri:

"Justifying the idea of an independent Kashmir the Communist leader, B. P. L. Bedi, told me as far back as 1948 that:

'With the Soviet Union and People's China at our backs, we can turn Kashmir into an arsenal for revolutionary movements in India and Pakistan.'⁸

Bakshi was appointed Prime Minister and both Syed Qasim and G. M. Sadiq were members of his Cabinet. Up to 1953 Sadiq was with Bakshi but later developed certain differences with him. In 1957, G. M. Sadiq, G. L. Dogra, Syed Qasim and D. P. Dhar fell out with Bakshi and formed the Democratic National Conference.

When Bakshi was removed from office in 1964 Shamsuddin (Bakshi's man) was nominated by him as Prime Minister, but when the agitation was launched in January, 1964 over the theft of the Holy Hair from Hazrat Bal Shrine in December, 1963 and conditions were very disturbed, Sadiq was appointed by the Centre as Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. Both before and after Sadiq took charge two important events took place. First the Chinese Conflict in 1962, the shock of which gave Pandit Nehru a minor stroke from which he did not recover fully and then his death from heart failure on May 27th, 1964. These happenings shook up Indian leadership and there were even more repercussions in Kashmir beyond those of December, 1963 caused by the theft of the Holy Hair from Hazrat Bal Shrine in Srinagar. Sadiq realised that it was necessary that Sheikh Abdullah be released from jail in order to appease the restless *Kashmiris* and he convinced the Indian Government that this was the only way to handle the uncertain situation in Kashmir. The timing of his release on 8-4-64 was decided by the State Government, influenced by Sadiq and also on the demand of the Awami Action Committee headed by Maulana Masoodi. When he was released Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, who was living in Delhi, sent a telegram to Sadiq:

"Sheikh Abdullah's release is a feather in your cap."

In 1965 there was the twelve days' war between India and Pakistan, as a result of which Sheikh Abdullah, being suspect, was again put behind the bars.

In 1970, Sadiq was a supporter of the State People's Convention, formed to evolve a consensus on the autonomy solution. Also in 1970 fifteen of the Congress members withdrew their support from Sadiq and joined Mir Qasim's Pradesh Congress, of which he was President. Mir Qasim now had the majority of the ruling party members with him and Sadiq had no support, although Mrs. Gandhi supported him.

Sadiq's reign was a short and turbulent one.

For some time past his health had been very troublesome and in December, 1971 he expired in Chandigarh and Mir Qasim was appointed in his place as Prime Minister. Altogether he had spent forty years in politics but had been fortunate in not having languished for long periods in jail like several others of his period, such as Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Ghulam Mohiuddin Kara, Maulana Saeed Masoodi, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mirza Afzal Beg and hundreds of workers who were beaten and tortured and had their health ruined.

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PANDIT PREM NATH BAZAZ

This interview was held before the news in our press of the demise on July 5th, 1984 in Delhi of Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, who helped to blaze a trail in the early days of the Freedom Struggle of the harshly treated *Kashmiris* against the despotism of the *Dogra raj*.

I was in Delhi for only four days on my way back home to Lahore, but Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, for whom I had great respect because of his long career in the political struggle of Kashmir as a freedom fighter, historian and journalist, and his own strong beliefs over which he would not compromise, was kind enough to give me an interview on the evening of October 11th, 1983 at his home in Hauz Khas, New Delhi.

Prem Nath Bazaz had very fine features, was very fair in colour. He had had two major heart operations in the U.S.A., so now at the age of 78 years he looked very frail and spoke with difficulty, catching his breath. Because of his difficulty in breathing our interview was a little disjointed and sometimes his daughter had to convey his meaning. He had two sons, a daughter and daughter-in-law to care for him, who were present, but I was disappointed not to meet the son who had written his biography, Nagin Bazaz. Here was the man who had worked for so many years closely with Sheikh Abdullah while their ideology was the same—about forty years—but who was also the man who later on became *Sheikh sahib's* bitterest critic and did more to try to damage his image than anyone else. But as Sheikh Abdullah said to Nagin Bazaz in an interview in Srinagar with him in the summer of 1981:

'That is politics.'

He remembered me from earlier days in Srinagar and said:

"I knew your husband, Dr. Taseer, very well when he was in Kashmir. We got on very well. When he came to Srinagar for discussions with Sheikh Abdullah on October 2nd, 1947 he met me at the shop of Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller, his old friend, on the Bund at mid-day. We all went upstairs so that we would be private and we were together for more than two hours. The discussion was on how could Kashmir accede to Pakistan. I said Kashmir must first remain as a State with

autonomy and then, when everything had settled down, whatever we decided when the situation was calm, that would be permanent."

Bazaz also confirmed that Dr. Taseer had helped in the drafting of the structure for the New Kashmir programme in the forties.

Bazaz was of the opinion that the reported banning by the West Punjab Government of essential items from the Pakistan side early in September, 1947, was incorrect. It just happened, because so far most of the truck drivers were *Punjabi Sikhs* and now after August, 1947 it was not possible for them to drive trucks by road to Srinagar. In any case the road was not safe beyond Uri. According to him the situation just happened. He thought it was not correct to say that it was a calculated move on the part of the Pakistan authorities. This view of the problem was also given to me by Raja Maqsood, at that time *Tehsildar* of Murree, who told me that the truck owners, mostly from Jhelum district were not willing to risk sending their trucks beyond the Pakistan border.

Born in 1911 Prem Nath Bazaz started participating and writing in 1931. In 1935 he started "*Hamdard*" as a weekly with Sheikh Abdullah, which was meant for people of all communities and with a secular outlook. He made a very valuable contribution to the journalism of Kashmir. Later on "*Hamdard*" became a daily paper. He has written about thirty books and pamphlets, ran eight newspapers and journals between 1932 and 1972, contributed articles to eighteen newspapers and journals from 1930 onwards.

Bazaz was an intellectual and progressive thinker, with a strong will. When he undertook any task he put his whole mind into it. He always adhered to his values of independent thinking and stood by a cause in which he believed, regardless of consequences to himself. In his newspaper, "*Hamdard*" he wrote what he believed in even if it meant fines or banning of his paper for some time. He worked with Sheikh Abdullah in the early thirties for some time to convert the Muslim Conference into the National Conference and thus join the national mainstream of the Independence movement. After some years he parted company with the *Sheikh* on divergence of views and founded the Kashmir Socialist Party and the Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference. Because of his independent views he always remained in the thick of controversy which won many friends but also made many hostile to him. When Bakshi Ghulam

Muhammad and others betrayed Sheikh Abdullah in 1953 and he was arrested and imprisoned without trial, Bazaz protested in the press against his incarceration.

Bazaz was a member of the Kashmir Labour Union, started by Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara in November, 1937 and participated in the first Labour Day on November 14th. Incidentally he was banned for six months from making speeches after this.

Sheikh Abdullah and Bazaz were together in 1942 in the National Conference. I asked the latter how and when his split with Sheikh Abdullah came after they had worked together for so many years. He said it was because in September, 1947 Sheikh Abdullah had given a guarantee to the *Maharaja* that he would side with him if he could be released from jail. He said:

"I think he was bored with being in jail. From Bhadrawah jail he sent a letter to a friend of his outside in which he said that the *Maharaja* should not join Pakistan but should join India. Sheikh Abdullah later publicly accepted that he had written this letter. I disapproved of his action and, therefore, I parted company with him. One more special reason was the fact that just before he was transferred to Badamibagh Cantonment and then released he had committed himself by sending a letter to the *Maharaja*, after which he was released and was taken to meet the *Maharaja* at Ghulab Bhawan, where he was living, to perform the ritual act of showing allegiance to one's ruler—a symbolic offering of a gold piece wrapped in a silk handkerchief. He made that presentation in order to get himself released from the jail and when I heard all this then I said that the parting of the ways between us had come."

I asked how he had heard this story and he replied that it had been told to him by a servant of the *Maharaja* who was present on the occasion.

But it seems he forgot to mention to me that he had already related this story in his book on the "*History of Kashmir*" published in 1954, and I quote:

"A report was published in the Congress organ "*The Hindustan Times*" of New Delhi, June 7, 1947 that Sheikh Abdullah had managed to send from the Badrawah sub-jail a letter to a friend

in Jammu in which he advised the *Maharaja* to once accede to the Indian Union and not remain independent as leaders of Muslim Conference wanted him to do.

"The *Maharaja* sent Dr. Chhapda, a confidant of the *Maharaja's* Private Secretary to meet Sheikh Abdullah in Badrawah jail. Sheikh Abdullah is supposed to have confirmed the contents of his letter to his Jammu friend and the changed views of his colleagues and workers outside. Then he was transferred in September, 1947 from Badrawah sub-jail to the Military Cantonment at Badami Bagh, Srinagar. He was set free on 29th September and he and his wife went to the palace to meet the *Maharaja* and pay "*nazrana*", the accepted token of loyalty to the *Maharaja*."¹

Moreover, Mahatma Gandhi had already visited Srinagar for the first and last time and had a ninety minutes' meeting with the *Maharaja* and *Maharani* on August 1st in the garden of Gulab Bhawan. He asked the *Maharaja* to ascertain the wishes of his people and not go against them as reported by the son, Dr. Karan Singh in his book, who was present at the interview. In this meeting the *Maharaja* apparently agreed to set free Sheikh Abdullah, so it seems it was only the question of the timing of the setting free which had to be decided and not the principle! Thus it could have been Sheikh Abdullah's impatience to be out of confinement so as to get on with his plans which led to the writing of the letter.²

I later met Dr. Karan Singh and his wife in Srinagar in August, 1983, at the marriage of the younger son of Mr. G. M. Shah, former Minister of Power and Works, and son-in-law of the late Sheikh Abdullah, a marriage celebrated in the usual grand scale of traditional *Kashmiri* marriages. My impression of him was that he would have written only facts of which he was sure.

Yet a third opinion is that of Agha Shaukat Ali, a law graduate and *tehsildar* in Kashmir, who was persuaded by Quaid-i-Azam to give up government service and join the Muslim Conference, where he became General Secretary in 1944, went to jail in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1946, along with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, was released on parole in August, 1947 because of the poor health of his mother, was supposed to be smuggled out of Kashmir along with Sardar Ibrahim Khan at the end of August, in order to start off a rebellion in Poonch against the Dogra regime, but instead

was rearrested and finally released in 1949, and sent back to Pakistan.

When I met Agha Shaukat in Islamabad in February, 1984 he gave me his opinion about the ingratiating letter supposed to have been written by Sheikh Abdullah to the *Maharaja* in order to be released from jail. He said:

"I would not believe even the letter as quoted by Dr. Karan Singh in his autobiography as having been found amongst his father's papers, unless I saw such a letter in *Sheikh sahib's* own handwriting. The writing of such a letter is not in keeping with *Sheikh sahib's* character nor would he lower his dignity thus. Such an action was also unnecessary when both Jawaharlal Nehru and *Gandhi-ji* had already visited Kashmir and persuaded the *Maharaja* to release Sheikh Abdullah."

Dr. Karan Singh has also described in his Memoirs the visit of *Gandhi-ji* to the palace in Srinagar on August 1st to meet his parents, an interview at which he was present and in which *Gandhi-ji* asked the *Maharaja* to go along with the wishes of his people. Dr. Karan Singh mentions that his mother had arranged fruits and fresh goat's milk for *Gandhi-ji*, who declined to partake of them as it was not his time for eating.

But Begum Abdullah told me that on August 2nd *Gandhi-ji* visited her at her home at Saura, where he was received by her and her mother, who had herself baked *kulchas*, in the preparation of which she was an expert. *Gandhi-ji* partook of these, along with goat's milk and invited *Begumsahiba's* mother to his prayer meeting the following day. He also reported to her that he had received a reply in the affirmative from the *Maharaja* that he would release Sheikh Abdullah. However, it seems to be generally believed that the assurance given to Mahatma Gandhi by the *Maharaja* that he would release Sheikh Abdullah was made conditional upon his writing the letter of September 26th, 1947 as quoted by Dr. Karan Singh in his book, in which Sheikh Abdullah was to guarantee the loyalty and support of himself and his Party members to the *Maharaja*.

Prem Nath Bazaz continued:

"After coming out of jail Sheikh Abdullah made a speech in Hazuri Bagh (5th October) giving people to understand that

he was neither for Pakistan nor for India. That non-committal attitude was the understanding he gave to the *Maharaja* that he would not work directly for one side or the other. I recorded this in my journal, "*Hamdard*". Now I could write freely in my paper because I was separated from him."

This statement is confirmed by Satish Vashishth in his book, who writes:

"From Bhadarwah jail Sheikh Abdullah sent a letter to a friend in Jammu that the *Maharaja* should declare the State's accession to India."

"Sheikh Abdullah wrote from his prison to the *Maharaja* that the Nationalists were ready to serve him. Then he was transferred to Badami Bagh. Immediately after his release Sheikh Abdullah and his wife went to the palace of the *Maharaja* to pay "*Nazrana*"—the token of loyalty.

"Then on October 1st it was disclosed on behalf of the (Jammu and Kashmir) Government that Sheikh Abdullah was released as an act of royal clemency."³

On a later visit to Srinagar in the summer of 1984 I myself asked Begum Abdullah to verify the truth of the story of the presentation of the "*Nazrana*" to the *Maharaja* after Sheikh Abdullah's release from jail on September 29th, but she emphatically denied the story as related by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz and Satish Vashishth in his book.

"*Pakistan Times*, Lahore, 9-10-47, reports from Srinagar 8-10-47:

"Prem Nath Bazaz asked the Government of India to advise Sheikh Abdullah and the *Maharaja* either to join Pakistan or to arrange a referendum on an *adult franchise* basis and that he added that the Indian Government is making overtures to the *Maharaja* to join the Union."

(This news was leaked out by a Srinagar local daily, which was then banned).

"*Pakistan Times*", Lahore, 18-10-47 reports from Srinagar, 17-10-47:

"Kashmir Socialist Party and Kashmir Kisan Mazdoor Conference are to send a joint delegation led by Prem Nath Bazaz, editor of "*Hamdard*", to Delhi and Karachi. The delegation will request Congress and the League High Command to advise the *Maharaja* to accede to Pakistan or to arrange a referendum."

As a result of this all three representatives were arrested.

Prem Nath Bazaz continued:

"People went to the *Maharaja* and said that as long as this man is free he will not stop his statements, so on October 26th I was taken off to jail, where I spent three years."

He was arrested as one of the pro-*Pakistani* elements. His son, Nagin Bazaz says in his biography of his father:

"He was taken to a mediaeval cell in Jammu jail. No bed to sleep on, two old blankets, jail food, no proper latrine and solitary confinement to his cell. After two months when Sheikh Abdullah had assumed power as chief of the Emergency Administration of the State he came to see Bazaz and gave orders that changes should be effected immediately. He was allowed to move outside the cell and meet Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, President, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, also detained there. Then in February, 1949 he was transferred to the notorious Kathua jail, then in April, 1949 to Udampur prison. Twice Sheikh Abdullah visited him there, but my father was not willing to follow his line, i.e. promise not to indulge in politics."⁴

After three years he was released but externed from the State.

Mr. Nagin also writes about his father:

"In 1955 father was again in touch with his old friend and political companion, Sheikh Abdullah, himself now detained in Kud special jail, in the hills, 20 miles north of Udampur. He started sending books on history, religion and philosophy to the *Sheikh*, about life, history and culture of the world in general and the Indian subcontinent in particular. These were acknowledged by *Sheikh sahib* in two letters from the jail and in July a letter of thanks for a parcel of Delhi sweets.

Then when Sheikh Abdullah was released from jail in January, 1958 Bazaz sent him a long telegram of congratulation, acknowledged by *Sheikh sahib* from his home in Saura on January 16, 1958."⁵

Therefore, in view of the renewal of correspondence in 1955 between the two I could not take his emphatic statement about a complete division with Sheikh Abdullah in 1947 all that seriously. I think it was a disagreement on principles—Bazaz's sense of morality. Also this reason was not taken seriously by two other associates of Sheikh Abdullah's whom I interviewed in Delhi at the same time, as being enough for a permanent split. They, being Marxists, thought that Sheikh Abdullah's letter of 26th September, 1947 to Maharaja Hari Singh and the offering of the gold sovereign, if correct, were merely political ploys used for the attainment of a more important object, or one could say "political expediency", as in the case of the drafting of the "New Kashmir" manifesto, presented to the National Conference annual conference in September, 1944 in which provision is still retained for "the Ruler of Jammu and Kashmir".

It was while Sheikh Abdullah was interned in Delhi in Kotla Lane after 1968 that Bazaz, now living in Delhi, became a frequent visitor to keep him company. Thus their friendship was revived for a while and the idea was born of a Convention on Kashmir, in which Jaya Prakash Narayan participated in Srinagar in 1974 and which ultimately helped to lead to the Indira Gandhi—Sheikh Abdullah Accord in 1975.

To revert to the controversial letter:

Dr. Karan Singh in his Memoirs quotes:

"On September 26, 1947 Sheikh Abdullah wrote a letter to the *Maharaja* from jail. It ran as follows:

'May it please Your Highness,

It is after about one and a half years' incarceration that—as long wished—I had an opportunity of having detailed talks with Thakur Nachint Chand Ji.' (Uncle of Dr. Karan Singh). What unfortunate things happened during this period in the State I need not mention. But it is now realised by every well-wisher of the State that many of the regrettable happenings of the past

have been due mainly to the misunderstandings which appear now to have been deliberately created by interested people in order to achieve their own ends. R. B. Ramchandra Kak, the ex-Prime Minister through his mischievous methods and masterly manoeuvrings brought these misunderstandings to a climax and succeeded in his attempts, though temporarily, to a certain extent. He painted me and my organisation in the darkest colours and in everything that we did or attempted to do to bring Your Highness and your people closer; base and selfish motives were attributed to me. But God be thanked that all these enemies of Your Highness and the State stand exposed today.

'In spite of what has happened in the past I assure Your Highness that myself and my party have never harboured any sentiment of disloyalty towards Your Highness' person, throne or dynasty. The development of this beautiful country and the betterment of its people is our common aim and interest and I assure Your Highness the fullest and loyal support of myself and my organisation. Not only this but I assure Your Highness that any party, within or without the State which may attempt to create any impediments in our efforts to gain our goal, will be treated as our enemy and will be treated as such.

'In order to achieve the common aim set forth above, mutual trust and confidence must be the mainstay. Without this it would not be possible to face successfully the great difficulties that beset our State on all sides at present.

'Before I close this letter I beg to assure Your Highness once again of my steadfast loyalty and pray that God under Your Highness' aegis bring such an era of Peace, Prosperity and Good Government that it may be second to none and be an ideal for others to copy.

Your Highness's Most Obedient Subject

S. M. Abdullah'.

"This hopeful letter led to Sheikh Abdullah's release from jail and was followed up by a meeting between him and my father at Gulab Bhavan at which, I was told, he even offered my father a gold sovereign in the traditional court manner."

The contents of this letter had obviously reached the offices of "*Pakistan Times*", Lahore, of which Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz was the Chief Editor. Their scathing editorial of 19-10-1947 says:

"We hope that Sheikh Abdullah will repudiate the implied allegation that he had suddenly joined the ranks of those who are loyal to "His Highness and his dynasty". We hope he is still proud of his disloyalty to His Highness's dynasty and in the final struggle that appears to be approaching between the Kashmir people and the usurpers of their rights he will not allow himself or his followers to stray into the wrong camp."

Another editorial of 29-10-1947 of the same paper says:

"Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's case is even blacker. The author of the "Quit Kashmir" movement has suddenly been converted to the slogan of "Don't Quit Kashmir".

"Both Nehru's Government and the leader of the National Conference have been guilty of treason and stand condemned before the bar of democratic opinion. In spite of what Mountbatten or Abdullah or Hari Singh may or may not have written and said, the Kashmir people are still the final arbiters of their own future. Their struggle for freedom has received a serious setback and the day of their liberation has perhaps been further postponed but we refuse to believe that the injustice that has been done will never be righted."

Yet on 30th October "*Pakistan Times*" reported that on 29th October Sheikh Abdullah left Srinagar for Delhi and urged a Kashmir plebiscite as soon as possible under the supervision of both India and Pakistan.

Justice M. Y. Saraf reports that after Begum Abdullah and Sheikh Abdullah had met the *Maharaja*, the latter left for Delhi on the 16th in response to an invitation from Nehru.

According to Savepalli Gopal in his biography of Nehru, as late as 21st October, 1947 in a letter to M. N. Mahajan, then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Jawaharlal Nehru advised the Kashmir authorities to invite Sheikh Abdullah, now released from jail, to form a provisional government and announce fresh elections. Nothing could be done about Accession until then. Sheikh Abdullah

also had not so far publicly concerned himself with Accession, as reported by "*Pakistan Times*" on 22-10-1947. "*Pakistan Times*", Lahore of 23-10-1947 reports that at that time Sheikh Abdullah was still in Delhi.

Dr. Karan Singh also quotes a letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to his father, the *Maharaja*, dated 13-11-47, in his book:

'As I pointed out to you, the only person who can deliver the goods in Kashmir is Sheikh Abdullah. He is obviously the leading popular personality in Kashmir. The way he has risen to grapple with the crisis has shown the nature of the man. I have a high opinion of his integrity and his general balance of mind. He may make any number of mistakes in minor matters, but I think he is likely to be right in regard to major decisions.

'But the real point is that no satisfactory way out can be found in Kashmir except through Sheikh Abdullah. If that is so, full confidence must be placed in him. There is no other way out as far as I can see it both from the short-term point of view and the long-term one. Sheikh Abdullah is earnestly desirous of co-operating and is amenable to any reasonable argument.'

Prem Nath Bazaz's contention as reported in "*Pakistan Times*" of 8-10-1947 of the overtures of the Indian Government are confirmed by a report:

"*Pakistan Times*", 27-9-47

Special Correspondent: Kashmir Has Decided To Join India: Patel's Terms For Accession (Srinagar, Sept. 25th)

"It is learnt on the highest authority that the final decision that Kashmir State has decided to join the Indian Union was taken about 15 days back and both the Kashmir Government and Patel's States Department are busy devising ways and means of making public this decision without causing universal Muslim opposition.

"The Kashmir Government is of the opinion that . . so long as a direct communication line has not been built between the Jammu and Kashmir State and the Indian Union through Pathankot, such a declaration might provoke the Pakistan

Government into imposing economic sanctions against this State.

"So orders have been issued by the Kashmir Government that a temporary boat bridge should be constructed over the Ravi near Pathankot, so that through vehicular traffic could be maintained between Jammu and the Indian Union. The metalling of the road from Jammu to Kathua is also proceeding at top speed. The idea is to keep up some sort of communication between the State and the Indian Union, so that essential supplies and troops could be rushed to Kashmir without having to transport them through Pakistan territory. These orders were kept as top secret but somehow the news leaked out and a local daily paper belonging to the *Kashmiri Pandit Sabha* published it. When other papers and news agencies tried to copy it the censors stepped in and prohibited its publication in the State and circulation outside.

"The Kashmir Government is also trying to construct an all-weather road linking Kashmir with Jammu *via* Poonch, as in winter the Banihal road is useless, for the Banihal Pass (8,950 feet high) gets snow blocked. The Indian Government has supplied the Kashmir Government with bulldozers for this purpose and expert technical advice is being arranged by the Indian Union through Skoda Engineers.

"The terms which the Indian Union offered to Kashmir for Accession to it are:

- (1) The Indian Union will foot the bill for the construction of a permanent bridge over the Ravi near Pathankot and also a railway line from Pathankot to Jammu. Indian Army Engineers are to be used for this purpose.
- (2) As a special case Kashmir State will be given an annual subvention of two crores of rupees for strengthening the State's armed forces and manning the frontiers.
- (3) Indian Army units will be posted at Gilgit and Air Force units are to be stationed at various strategic points, where the Indian Union will construct airfields.
- (4) A lump sum of money, probably several crores, will be paid

to Kashmir Government to modernise the State's frontier defences, notably on the west and north-west touching Pakistan borders and Indian Army technical assistance will be made available for this purpose.

- (5) The Treaty Road between Srinagar and Ladakh, leading to Central Asia, will be jointly managed as was done during the last one hundred years by the British and the State.
- (6) Kashmir State will be given the special privilege as under the British rule, to import foreign goods through Indian ports by customs bond, thereby giving the State the advantage of collecting customs duty on all the imports into the State, whether from India or abroad.

Exchange of Secret Messages:

"During the last four weeks couriers have been flying to and from Delhi carrying important and highly confidential documents. High officials were entrusted with the job. Thakor Harnam Singh, the present Chief Conservator of Forests of Kashmir and a blood relation of the *Maharaja* was entrusted with this secret task. Early last week when he flew from Srinagar, with the finalised draft, unfortunately the plane developed some engine trouble *en route* and had to touch down at the Lahore aerodrome. It so happened that a mob attacked the passengers and robbed them of all their belongings, though none were killed or even injured. They were Muslim refugees from India camping out at Walton airport. Thakor Harnam Singh's attache-case containing these top-secret documents was also snatched. He returned to Srinagar from Delhi by the next available plane and narrated the misfortune.

"The *Maharaja* and his advisers are fearing that the mob, on reading those documents, which were of a political nature, might have passed them on to the Pakistan authorities, in which case the whole conspiracy will be known to them. Whether this has actually happened or not nobody knows. But whether by sheer accident or through deliberate retaliation the Pakistan Government's decision to stop export of essential commodities like foodstuffs, salt, petrol, etc. to Kashmir has come a few days after this incident at the Lahore aerodrome. The *Maharaja* and his advisers are at their wits' end."

The above report has also been quoted by Muhammad Yusuf Saraf in his book, pp. 845-847.⁹

"*Pakistan Times*", Lahore, 16-10-47 further reports:

"Srinagar, 15-10-47. The Kashmir Government has confirmed the news that it is linking the State with East Punjab and making a bridge over the river Ravi, after which it is expected that the declaration will be made for joining India."

"*Pakistan Times*", Lahore, 30-10-47 reports:

"An official spokesman of the Pakistan Government said in Karachi on 29th October:

'The decision of the *Maharaja* rejoining the Indian Union has not come as a surprise to political circles in Karachi. The fact that secret negotiations had been going on for some weeks past between the States Department of the Government of India and the *Maharaja* of Kashmir for the Accession of the State to India was well-known here, and it was understood here that Sardar Patel was only waiting for a suitable opportunity in order to announce this to the world.

'The fact that both the Prime and Deputy Ministers of Kashmir had paid frequent visits to New Delhi to consult the Government of India but not a single responsible representative of the Kashmir Government had ever cared to visit Karachi to hold discussions with the Government of Pakistan is also there.'

In the Declaration of June 3rd, 1947, Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, had stated that with the creation of two independent states, India and Pakistan, paramountcy would lapse. Now all princely States would be free to join either India or Pakistan or proclaim themselves independent. Sardar Vallabhai Patel was appointed as Minister for States on 5th July and had only forty days left before August 14th to settle the fates of the more than 500 States. He had immediately prepared the Instruments of Accession and Standstill Agreement Forms for all of them, on his appointment.

In their book Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre quote Lord Mountbatten, Viceroy of India as having written:

"Item 5, Reconstruction of the Executive Council (VCP 76), Report No. 10, June 28, 1947.

"26. I have had some difficult meetings, particularly one with the leaders on June 13, about the position of the Indian States. Nehru pursued the traditional Congress Party line that any Indian successor Government is entitled to assume paramountcy after the transfer of power and strongly denying the right of States to declare their independence. . . Jinnah of course took the opposite point of view that Indian States were Sovereign States for every purpose, except insofar as they had entered into treaties with the Crown. After a long and acrimonious discussion all agreed that the Government of India should set up a new department to be called the "States Department", to deal with matters of common concern with the States; in fact that it should take over everything not connected with paramountcy from the present Political Department.

"27. I am glad to say that Nehru has not been put in charge of the new States Department, which would have wrecked everything. Patel, who is essentially a realist and very sensible, is going to take it over in consultation with Nishtar. Even better news is that V. P. Menon is to be the Secretary. By this means, I think we shall avoid a really bad break with the States with all the endless repercussions that this would have entailed."

"29. On the subject of the States, Nehru and Gandhi are pathological. Nehru said he must go to Kashmir to get his friend Sheikh Abdullah (the President of the States National Conference) out of prison and to support the Freedom Movement in the State; Gandhi came to see me and suggested that he should go to Kashmir to prepare the way for Nehru. Finally I told them I had an invitation from the *Maharaja*, who is an old friend and that I would greatly prefer that they should let me go and have some discussions with the *Maharaja* and the Prime Minister before they tried their hand. They were both very anxious that he should make no declaration of independence and should, in fact, indicate a willingness to join the Constituent Assembly.

Minutes of Viceroy's Staff Meetings
Fortieth Meeting, June 9, 1947."¹⁰

Justice M. Y. Saraf has written in his book:

"By the end of August it had become quite evident that Maharaja Hari Singh had almost made up his mind to accede to India. The transfer of the Muslim majority *tehsils* of Gurdaspur and Batala to India by Radcliffe under the influence of Mountbatten, the dismissal of Pandit Ramchandra Kak on 11th August, the removal of the Pakistan flags from the post offices on 14th August, the visit of Mahatma Gandhi and his complete success in winning over the *Maharaja's* family, the enlistment of fresh troops and the distribution of arms and ammunition among non-Muslims, the reign of terror let loose in the districts of Poonch, the harassment and isolated killings of Muslims in the districts of Kathua and Jammu, which had sent thousands to Pakistan for shelter—and the increasing traffic of officials between Srinagar and Delhi, left no room for doubt that plans were being secretly finalised for the State's Accession to India."¹¹

"*Pakistan Times*", Lahore, 29-2-48

The following extract from an article may also be noted:

"Annex Hyderabad, rush into East Bengal, announce Kashmir's Accession to India and then browbeat Western Pakistan, that was the broad plan of the Indian Pateletarians. The *Maharaja* of Kashmir's Accession was all the time in their pocket. But the "revolt" of the people of Kashmir blew up the whole scheme. The *Maharaja* had to show his hand. His little plot to seal up the border regions, annihilate or evict the *ex-servicemen* district of Poonch, Muzaffarabad, Raisi and Mirpur and thus turn the Muslim State into a Hindu state (as Kapurthala had done) having failed, India had to send in her troops prematurely.

"Indian military experts expected the whole campaign to last only a fortnight. Here again the heroic people of Kashmir foiled the enemy's hopes. The military experts then told the politicians frankly that the Kashmir campaign might drag on for years. The industrialist financiers of the campaign became fidgety. The politicians became nervous about loss of face.

"The Three Plans

Mahatama Gandhi urged Indo-Pakistan negotiations. Patele-

tarians proposed an attack on Pakistan bases. And Jawaharlal suggested making an appeal to U.N.O. Negotiations were tried. India and Pakistan held eight meetings on the Kashmir question. But all the compromise formulae suggested by Pakistan were rejected by Nehru, who blurted out at the final meeting that he "must have Kashmir". Patel's plan was considered to be too risky. The Junagadh adventure had made the legality of a Prince's Accession rather doubtful and it was feared that an attack on Pakistan might, among other things, result in outside intervention. So Jawaharlal won the day. India went to the U. N. Security Council."¹²

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MAULANA MUHAMMAD SAEED MASOODI

Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi lives in Ganderbal, about 45 k.m. from Srinagar and he being one of the oldest associates of Sheikh Abdullah even though not now with the National Conference, I was prepared to go there to interview him, considering him to be one of the most important figures in the Kashmir Freedom Struggle, starting first from opposition to the *Dogra raj*. He had a record of more than fifty years' contribution to the movement, was a founder member of Muslim Conference, a founder member of the National Conference, had been jailed a number of times. However, in response to my request he asked my hostess, Begum Abdullah, to send him a car and said he would instead come to Srinagar to meet me. I being essentially a naive person was impressed by the apparent generosity of his offer. I had neglected to remember that he was a seasoned politician, who was now in the Opposition Party as President of the State Congress (I) since 1978.

Maulana sahib who was accompanied by his son, had emphasised that *Begumsahiba* should also be present at our meeting, so when they arrived on the 22nd August 1983, we all sat down in her drawing-room and these two seasoned and experienced Politicians—at one time together, now on opposite sides—reminisced about the past days and this political philosopher *Maulana sahib* talked earnestly about historical processes.

"The first movement was to lead the masses. They did not have people to give advice from the historical point of view. In the first movement there were two objectives to get rid of the *Maharaja*. Part of this was the "Quit Kashmir" movement, then came the attack from the tribesmen after Partition. This was the period 1931—46. The second movement was 1947—50, only it was no movement, only a stalemate. People began to think 'Where are we now, what is our future?' This pause for reflection lasted for four years. Then there came the cry for a plebiscite. Sheikh Abdullah thought that if we had friendly relations with both sides we would be best off. After 1952 we began to consider what path we should now follow."

Maulana sahib is a benevolent bearded old man with four front teeth missing. These he lost on May 8th, 1965 when participating in a public meeting, 50,000 strong, held at Jamia Masjid, Srinagar, to protest against the re-arrest of Sheikh Abdullah on his return from

his *Haj plus* political tour of Arab countries in 1965. The meeting was attacked by the Indian police, he and Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara were dragged out of their jeep while returning home and severely beaten. G. M. Kara also lost two teeth! The two were arrested along with hundreds of others and were released in December, 1967. Previous to this 1965 event he had been a member of Sheikh Abdullah's delegation which accompanied him to Pakistan in May, 1964 for discussions with the Pakistan Government, which shows the trust *Sheikh sahib* put in him at that time.

He told me that in 1928 he was first a teacher, then a lecturer in Arabic before joining Sheikh Abdullah in his movement. Talking of the condition of the people of Kashmir at the time when their group began to work he said that the situation was such that if a labourer, who had gone to Lahore in the winter to earn, wrote a letter to his village home in the Valley there was not even anyone in his village able to read the letter.

Maulana sahib was arrested along with *Sheikh sahib* in 1932 and both were lodged in Central Jail in solitary confinement. He reminded *Begumsahiba* with a chuckle how, while in Central Jail he and *Sheikh sahib* used to meet at the water tap in the courtyard so as to discuss plans for starting the Muslim Conference when they were released. He also listed the special qualities of *Sheikh sahib* in promoting his work, one of which was that of accepting suggestions and advice from men of talent in his state. He particularly mentioned in the field of education my husband and Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, who was appointed as Director of Education, both of whom he had known in the forties.

In 1934 in Sialkot he and Sheikh Abdullah started the Muslim Young Men's Association, which then spread to Srinagar.

In 1935 the Urdu weekly, "*Hamdard*", which advocated secularism, and which later became a daily, was started by Sheikh Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz, with Maulana Masoodi as its first editor.

Before the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference was finally launched on June 12th, 1939 with Masoodi as General Secretary and editor of its official organ, the daily "*Khidmat*", there was a National Demands manifesto produced by a group of nationalists from various parties and in order to press for their

demands an unlawful procession was taken out on 29-8-38, section 144 having previously been imposed. They included amongst others Sheikh Abdullah, G. M. Sadiq, Prem Nath Bazaz, Mirza Afzal Beg, Mian Ahmed Yar, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Kashyup Bandhu, Sardar Budh Singh, Pandit Jia Lal Killam, Pandit Shyam Lal Saraf, Maulana Masudi, Shambhu Nath Peshin, who were all signatories to this National Demands manifesto and were arrested. The manifesto related to the various grievances of the people—large scale unemployment, onerous taxes, exorbitant revenue, lack of medical facilities, and demanded a change in Government policies. This was the first time that Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs went to jail together. They were released at the beginning of March, 1939.

In the summer of 1944, when Quaid-i-Azam visited Jammu and Kashmir at the invitation of the National Conference and Muslim Conference he had talks with members of both the parties. His insistence was that Muslims should organise themselves under one flag and under one platform. Before this both G. M. Sadiq and *Maulana sahib* met the Quaid in New Delhi and opened talks for inviting him to Jammu and Kashmir on behalf of the National Conference.

On behalf of the National Conference Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, G. M. Sadiq, Mirza Afzal Beg and Maulana Masudi met Quaid-i-Azam in Srinagar during his visit. The object was to bring about a compromise between the two parties. The Muslim Conference high command was of opinion that at heart Maulana Masudi was really anti-Congress. Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas had not met since 1940 when they parted company politically on Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas' joining the revived Muslim Conference. Now they, along with Maulana Masudi also had a meeting to try and resolve differences, but it proved futile.

Maulana Masudi was also jailed in the "Quit Kashmir" movement of 1946 and was released on September 29th, 1947 along with Sheikh Abdullah. Then in 1955 along with 200 other workers of Sheikh Abdullah he was jailed for three years in the Hazrat Bal murder case.

In December, 1963, when the theft of the *Moe-e-Muqaddas* took place and the whole of the Valley was in turmoil, it was at the initiative of Maulana Masoodi that an Awami Action Committee was formed for its recovery. This Committee also demanded the

release of Sheikh Abdullah, in jail since April, 1958 and released in April, 1964.

After Masoodi's release from jail in December, 1967 a State People's Convention was started in June, 1968, with Prem Nath Bazaz's initiative and Masoodi sahib was a member of the Sponsors' Committee. The object was to spell out an agreed formula for the settlement of the Kashmir issue. After two meetings and before the third meeting of the Convention could take place it fizzled out because according to Prem Nath Bazaz, of Sheikh Abdullah's lack of interest. And now came the three years' negotiations between Mr. Parthasathi on behalf of the Union and Mirza Afzal Beg on behalf of the State to decide upon the terms of the Kashmir Accord, which was to bring Sheikh Abdullah now nearly seventy years of age, back into power in 1975 as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. But by now Maulana Masudi had joined forces with Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara and Prem Nath Bazaz on the side of the Janata Party in time for the State Elections which were held in 1977 and he was on the Janata Committee for the State as Convenor. In an interview in Srinagar in June, 1981 he is quoted by Prem Nath Bazaz's son, Nagin Bazaz as having said about this episode in his political career:

"To fight an election as opposition it was necessary to protect people's interest and to tell the ruling party that the time was fast approaching when they will have to tolerate the opposition. Only history will tell whether the action opposition took under the fever of the Janata Party was correct or not".¹

So now *Maulana Masudi sahib*, his son, Begum Abdullah and I all had a very agreeable lunch together, when they discussed development projects for the former's district, after which while taking his leave and I at the same time realising that I had got nothing substantial out of him, his parting shot to me was:

"If you have any more questions you would like to ask me please send them in the form of a questionnaire to Ganderbal and I will return my reply."

I lost no time and the next day posted my questionnaire, which included such questions as:

"Up to what period did you work with Sheikh Abdullah actively?

"When did your differences with his policies start?

"Why did you attach yourself to the Janata Party for the 1977 Elections?

"What was your opinion of the regimes of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, Mir Muhammad Qasim, with whom you worked?

"When did you retire from active politics, political involvement?"

for I had been very impressed by the list of his very varied experiences.

Needless to say he did not send a reply and when, meeting him soon after in a function I reproached him for his deviousness, he sweetly smiled and reminded me that he was now an old war horse and what could he have to say which would be so useful!

From 1932–1968—thirty-six years—he had been a trusted political partner of Sheikh Abdullah's, even being included in the delegation which went to Pakistan in 1964, so one can appreciate the assessment of Suraiya Ali, *Sheikh sahib's* younger daughter—herself the wife of a doctor—that the shock of this betrayal of one so much trusted was one of the factors responsible for *Sheikh sahib's* gradual deterioration in health, onset of diabetes, then a severe heart attack during the State Elections of 1977, the continuous tension of political tussles with the Centre aggravating his heart condition, resulting in his final illness and demise in 1982.

All in all, my greatest admiration was for Begum Abdullah, first for having allowed me to meet in her own house Maulana Masudi who was now no longer in her husband's National Conference and for receiving and entertaining with such perfect manners one who had for years worked with her husband, considering that from the latter's point of view he had let him down very badly by deserting him at the time most needed, i.e. the 1977 Elections. But as Maulana sahib would have said:

"Only history will tell whether my action at that time was the correct one or not!"

The following summer (1984) when I attended a public meeting in Ganderbal with Begum Abdullah we called on Maulana Masudi. I was sorry to find that in health he was now a mere shadow of his former self so I was glad that before entering his house *Begumsahiba* reminded me not to mention anything to him about political differences of the earlier years. In spite of his being so unwell he and his family insisted on entertaining us to tea before we left for Srinagar.

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GHULAM MOHYUDDIN KARA

Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara, Secularist and Leftist, a cousin of G. M. Sadiq, who was appointed by the Centre in 1964 as Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, and who died in 1972, was the only politician whom I interviewed in Srinagar who played "hard to get". It took nearly a month of effort to pin him down and I am grateful to Mian Ghulam Sarwar, an admirer of his, for physically bringing him to his own office from the nearby courts where he was still practising, on September 27th, 1983. He was accompanied by his Secretary, Peer Hafizullah Makhdoomi (Advocate), General Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference, Ex-General Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Political Conference.

Now about seventy years of age, slim, small in stature, he is still intense and intellectually alive. He was rather disjointed in his account of his many political experiences, perhaps because they were so various, so I had to piece them together myself datewise. I thought he was important because he seemed to be a man of principles, dedicated in his beliefs, which developed and changed as he thought necessary, i.e., they were not static.

No leader can carry on his movement unless he has dedicated people to work for and with him and Kara was one of such. He played a very valuable part in the "Quit Kashmir" movement, when a number of leaders had been arrested, along with Sheikh Abdullah in May, 1946. Sadiq and Bakshi had escaped to Lahore and he carried the load on his shoulders of organising the campaign underground until Sheikh Abdullah was released from jail at the end of September, 1947. He was modest enough not to mention the number of times he had been jailed for his convictions, 1934, 1953-54, 1955-58, 1965-67 being the more important. He said:

"In 1932 as a second year student in Sri Partap College I joined the Muslim Conference as a founder member. I went to jail in 1934 when I was a third year student for six months and then went on with my studies. I was one of the organisers of the Reading Room Party in 1930, where concerned young men met for discussion on political problems. I remained an active member of the Muslim Conference although I was inclined towards secularism, so that I naturally became a founder member of the National Conference when it was started in 1938.

"I passed my LLB. from Aligarh in 1939 and while there I was a supporter of the Indian Congress. My father (Ahmedullah) who was a shawl merchant in Calcutta also had links with the Congress. I was in sympathy with the Leftists and Socialists like Jayaprakash Narain, Fazl Ilahi Qurban, due to my brother-in-law, Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq and we all came very close to the Lahore group, which included Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din and Faiz Ahmed Faiz and in 1942 I, *plus* D. P. Dhar, Ghirdhari Lal Dogra were won over to the Communist cause through the *Bedis*.

"I was the first person to organise the students when in college in 1934-36. Our group created the first students' organisation in Kashmir—the Kashmir Students' Federation. I was also the first person to organise labour, Kashmir Labour Union in November, 1937 and we observed Labour Day on November 14th. This movement was also supported by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, who was then prohibited from making any speech for six months.

"The 1935 Act was passed by the Parliament and Provincial Governments were created in India, so the Indian Congress and Muslim League came into power. The "Quit India" movement started in 1942. I was the Srinagar President of the National Conference, 1943-44. In 1946 our National Conference passed a resolution that it was the people who should be consulted about joining India and not the *Maharaja*. In Lahore, in March, 1946, Sheikh Abdullah gave a statement in which he said that the *Maharaja* should quit Kashmir, for our land was purchased by the British and the *Maharaja* had no right to remain. After Sheikh Abdullah was arrested in May, 1946, I went underground and continued to work for the Movement. Mirza Afzal Beg went to Anantnag and worked from there. I had my base in Saura, Sheikh Abdullah's home. At that time we did not have the full support of the Congress."

In the "Quit Kashmir" movement of 1946, after the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, Mr. Kara started a War Council. Posters and handbills appeared, hundreds of people were arrested, including D. P. Dhar, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu, Pandit Shyam Lal Saraf, Sardar Budh Singh, Comrade Sant Singh. Kara was the hero of the movement. The Government did its best to find him and arrest him, but in vain. Hundreds of houses were searched. He had his headquarters

at Saura, Sheikh Abdullah's family home and he often moved about in a *burqa* to escape recognition. He was known as "*Bulbul of Kashmir*".

Mr. Kara continued:

"In the summer of 1947, Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan came to Srinagar for discussions, while Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah had already left for Pakistan. There was the problem of deciding about an independent Kashmir under the *Maharaja*. The Muslim League thought they would be able to divide India and keep the *Maharaja* in power. Shaukat Hyat wanted that the National Conference should support joining Pakistan, but we replied that we were willing only if Pakistan agrees that the *Maharaja* is not the one to decide on Accession.

"In May, 1947 the Stafford Cripps plan was put forward. Liaquat Ali Khan had agreed with our National Conference that Kashmir should remain independent. In October, 1947 after the release of Sheikh Abdullah. G. M. Sadiq went to Lahore with Dr. Taseer to join Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad for talks on the basis of our programme of "New Kashmir". Mirza Afzal Beg and I went to Delhi with Sheikh Abdullah on October 20th. Sadiq arrived there from Lahore and said that Quaid-i-Azam had refused our terms but Liaquat Ali Khan would try for the independence of Kashmir and it was then decided by us that after *Eid*, at the end of October, Sheikh Abdullah and one or two others would go to Rawalpindi or Lahore for discussions with Quaid-i-Azam. However, things turned out otherwise after the invasion of the *Pathans*.

"As I was living underground at Saura during the "Quit Kashmir" movement I knew about the talks which Sheikh Abdullah had with Dr. Taseer when he came to Srinagar at the beginning of October. There was also another meeting at the Majestic Hotel, Srinagar on the same day with Taseer in which Sheikh Abdullah, Mirza Afzal Beg, I and G. M. Sadiq were all present.

"Taseer was already a friend of mine from Lahore days and Kashmir days when he was Principal of our college. We said to him:

'Get this ban, cutting off essential supplies of goods from

Pakistan removed and we will be willing to discuss with you about our joining Pakistan.'

"When Sheikh Sadiq Hassan came round about the same time we told him also that we were willing to join Pakistan on the basis of our "New Kashmir" programme. This had also been told to Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan in the previous July when he came to Srinagar. But Jinnah was opposed to agreeing to our National Conference resolution that it should be the people who should decide about the Accession of the State. All the leadership of the Muslim League, e.g. Mian Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana, Sardar Abdur Rashid Nishtar, were agreeing with us, but they said:

'None of us can convince Mr. Jinnah.'

At this point I asked Mr. Kara if he was aware that Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, who had also come to Srinagar at the same time as my husband, had met Sheikh Abdullah separately and had taken him with him to Lahore to try to arrange a meeting with Quaid-i-Azam in Karachi. He quite indignantly replied that it could not have been possible because once Sheikh Abdullah was released from jail at the end of September he was busy making speeches, giving press statements and meeting the people who came pouring into his house. I said that Begum Iftikharuddin herself had told me, the story had also been confirmed by her driver, who had driven Sheikh Abdullah back to Srinagar, but he still insisted it could not have been possible—everyone would have known. I added that Mr. Habib Kaifi, one time Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and also Begum Zafar Ali, ex-MLA, had confirmed the story but he still remained indignant!

Mr. Kara continued:

"After the death of Quaid-i-Azam Liaquat Ali Khan sent me a message through Prof. M. Abdul Aziz, who used to teach in Amar Singh College under Dr. Taseer and a former member of All India States Muslim League. He came with a letter which read:

'If you will support a plebiscite then we will agree to your joining Pakistan.'

"But Sheikh Abdullah refused to change his mind at that stage as reported by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad to me."

I asked Mr. Kara what happened to the letter which Prof. M. Abdul Aziz brought to him and he replied that it had been sent on to Sheikh Abdullah, who had kept it. When I reached Lahore at the end of October I traced the Abbottabad address of Prof. Aziz and wrote to ask him if he had been the carrier of the letter mentioned by Mr. Kara and his reply came to me that he had indeed brought it to Srinagar in November, 1948, that it suggested,

'Accession in mutually acceptable affairs only'

and that it had been occasioned by the treacherous Hyderabad "*fait accompli*".

Up to 1947 Kara was considered as one of Sheikh Abdullah's top colleagues, then somehow he became left out of the administration, perhaps because he was overshadowed by his own brother-in-law, G. M. Sadiq, who was taken instead, perhaps because of lack of charisma in leadership. He was serious, hardworking and a shrewd politician, a great orator in *Kashmiri*, who somehow never achieved the recognition he should have, so he gradually drifted away from National Conference and in June, 1953 formed the Kashmir Political Conference because of his disagreement with the performance and controversial politics of the ruling party and its leaders. This Conference advocated a solution of the Kashmir problem in accordance with the wishes of the *Kashmiris* and because he was suspect he was arrested along with others and released in December, 1954.

In March, 1955 there was the Hazrat Bal murder case, started after there were demonstrations against the *Bakshi* Government in February, when clashes took place and three people were killed. Two hundred important people, including Maulana Masoodi and Kara were arrested. He was jailed for three years and released in 1958.

On May 8th, 1965, while participating in a large public meeting in Juma Masjid, Srinagar to protest against the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah he and Maulana Masoodi were caught and received severe beatings from the police, in which he lost two teeth. He was again arrested and released in December 1967.

Kara was associated with the Plebiscite Front formed during Bakshi's regime, in which Sheikh Abdullah also became involved when he was released from jail in March, 1968.

Bakshi could not win him over. He was one of those responsible for bringing Sheikh Abdullah closer to Mrs. Gandhi in 1972 so that negotiations could be started between the Union and the State for settlement of the terms of the Kashmir Accord, by which Sheikh Abdullah returned to power in 1975, as Chief Minister.

Kara said he was in agreement with the terms of the Accord although I found that some young lawyers whom I met were very bitter about these terms, feeling that the last vestige of their freedom had now gone. They said to me despairingly in the summer of 1984:

'Where are we going? What will happen to us?'

In 1968 a Sponsors' Committee was formed with Sheikh Abdullah as President for a State People's Convention (to make suggestions for a new approach for solving the Kashmir problem) of which he was a member with, amongst others, Prem Nath Bazaz, Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi and Shamim Ahmad Shamim, the people with whom he later collaborated in 1977 on behalf of the Janata party in the State Elections of 1977. So since then he, like Maulana Masoodi, is on the other side of the fence!

I asked Mr. Kara:

"What do you envisage as the set up in Jammu and Kashmir in the near future?"

He replied:

"I see a union of separate states in a loose federation for the whole subcontinent."

He finished by adding:

"There is no doubt that Dr. Taseer made a very great contribution to the cause of Kashmir. He was not only an educationist. I shall always remember the very good times I had when meeting him, both in Kashmir and in Lahore, along with Ghulam Rasool Meher, Prof. A. S. Bokhari and Abdul Majid Salik."

CHAUDHRY GHULAM MUHAMMAD ABBAS KHAN

I tried to gather some impressions from *Kashmiris* in Pakistan about Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas for either before or after the 1947 period, but they were mostly negative. People talked more of his lacks. Somehow he did not possess the kind of personality which made an impact on his associates and workers. In this he differed from Sheikh Abdullah, with whom he worked until political differences parted them.

However, he was important enough to be appointed as Supreme Head of the Azad Kashmir Government after his arrival in Pakistan early in 1948 and for Sheikh Abdullah and Pandit Nehru to have made it a point of honour to see that his daughter, Rahat, abducted from Samba, Jammu Region in November, 1947, be recovered and finally restored to her father in 1954, a reward of several lakh rupees being offered for her recovery. And finally that at the request of the Pakistan Government he should be released from confinement in Jammu jail and sent to Pakistan, where he arrived at Sialkot on March 1st, 1948.

The following is an assessment of collective opinions of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan's political career.

He was born in Jammu in the same year as Sheikh Abdullah, i.e. 1905, the son of Chaudhry Nawabdin. His maternal uncle was Syed Asadullah Shah, an Advocate of Jammu. He did his LL.B. from Law College, Lahore and started his career in the late nineteen twenties as a financial clerk in the State Secretariat. Then he became a lawyer and worked in the courts of Jammu.

On his return from Lahore in 1929 he re-organised the Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu, formed originally in 1921 under the name of Anjuman-i-Islamia, for the betterment of Muslims, by the students of Prince of Wales College, Jammu—there were Malik Maqbool Ahmed, Qazi Shamsuddin, M. Basharat Ahmed, Master Ghulam Haider, Sardar Abdullah Khan Lodhi. They campaigned for a Mastgarh Masjid, because there was none. They looked after Muslim orphans, they were concerned with social work. Annual meetings were organised in Jammu region attended by thousands of Muslims, which helped to counter the propaganda of the Arya Samaj movement (which worked from 1920–30) and the Shudji movement, whose aim was the conversion of Muslims to Hindus. Allah Rakhar

Saghar of Jammu, Abbas' closest associate in politics was also working in this association.

Then Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas started political work and joined Sheikh Abdullah after his return from Aligarh in 1930. They were both involved in the Reading Room party in Srinagar, which was started by Sheikh Abdullah, G. N. Gilkar and G. A. Ashai and others, where educated jobless young men, mostly Muslims, met regularly to discuss politics.

After the riots of July, 1931 in Kashmir when, on the request of Allama Iqbal and the initiative of Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed the All India Kashmir Committee was formed with members from all over India, a meeting was held between Mirza Bashiruddin and Sheikh Abdullah in Garhi Habibullah Rest-house, in which it was decided that the latter would take on the initiative of organising the work in Jammu and the Valley and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas would act as his secretary for dealing with the task of co-ordinating the work of the teams of lawyers sent from all over India by the Committee to try the thousands of cases of those people who had been arrested during the riots in Jammu and the Valley.

In 1932 the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was formed, which was associated with the All India Muslim Conference, of which Allama Iqbal was the President and from the platform of which he made his famous speech at the Allahabad meeting in 1930. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was the first General Secretary of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. This happened after the riots of 1931 in the Valley, when Abbas went to jail along with Sheikh Abdullah, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, a devoted *Ahmedi* co-worker of Sheikh Abdullah's, Ghulam Ahmed Ashai, Sardar Gauhar Rahman, Mistri Yakub Ali. Sheikh Abdullah and Abbas were sent to Hari Parbat Fort.

Abbas was also one of the two non-official members from Jammu, one Hindu, Lok Nath Sharma, one Muslim, in the Glancy Commission appointed at the end of 1931.

In early 1934 a Civil Disobedience Movement was launched by Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas as from Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, regarding the non-implementation of the Glancy Commission Recommendations and Constitutional Reforms made by it in 1931. He was arrested in Srinagar after calling a public meeting and was jailed in Udampur jail for six months. Many people offered

themselves for arrest in Srinagar and Jammu at this time. A. R. Saghar of Jammu was also given four months' imprisonment.

On August 5th, 1938, a Responsible Government Day was observed in the Valley and then a manifesto, known as the "National Demand" drafted by a number of leaders. Its goal was to "bring about a complete change in the social and political outlook of the people and to achieve responsible government under the aegis of the *Maharaja*." The adoption and publication of this manifesto led to the arrest of hundreds of leaders and workers, including Sheikh Abdullah, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, A. R. Saghar and many others. They were released early in 1939.

At the special session of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference held in Srinagar on 10th June, 1939, which was to pave the way for the re-naming of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference as All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas said in the plenary session:

"The garb in the shape of Muslim Conference has become outworn and threadbare. Now we are in need of a nationalist guise. The time has come when we should discard the old and decayed mantle and tear it to pieces."¹

During the formation of the National Conference in 1938 Abbas was still a great associate of Sheikh Abdullah. In Jammu, however, the Muslims did not accept him as a National Conference leader—they were pro-Pakistan. They were also against Sheikh Abdullah, thinking him to be pro-Congress and pro-Gandhi. Towards the end of the thirties when young men returning from Aligarh University told Abbas that he had made a mistake in joining National Conference he, because he did not really have any strong political convictions re-started the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1942 in Srinagar with the support of Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah. And this became the parting of the ways between him and Sheikh Abdullah politically. They were working in different environments—Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan in Jammu, where there was a strong Muslim middle class, much influenced by Punjab Muslim politics—in the Valley Sheikh Abdullah, choosing to remain with the Nationalist cause supported by his hero-worshipping *Kashmiris*. A number of well-meaning friends and co-workers tried to patch up their differences, but without success. Although politically they remained at opposite ends of the pole, it says much for Sheikh

Abdullah's generosity of spirit that on the request of his old class-fellow, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, a member of the Pakistan delegation to the U.N. meeting at Lake Success, New York, on the Kashmir question in January, 1948, on his return to Kashmir from the New York meeting, he arranged for Abbas to be released from Jammu jail and sent to Pakistan in early 1948.

Abbas' political impact in the Valley was not what it should have been because he could not speak *Kashmiri* and also he was not a State subject, his family having migrated from Jullunder. Then his father, Chaudhry Nawabdin was an *Ahmedi* missionary in the State, which helped to alienate the closely knit Muslim minority population of Jammu from him. As a minority they were backward, they were not well off, they were small shopkeepers, civil servants, teachers, etc., i.e. they formed a large middle class with a collective opinion. Moreover, the campaign against the *Dogra raj* could not be very effective in Jammu, where there was a Hindu majority. It was to Abbas' credit that in spite of difficulties he and his colleagues, particularly those from Jammu, kept up their spirit of work, went to far off places like Mirpur and Kotli to campaign, where there were not even roads at that time, and were even issued with notices to leave such areas within twenty-four hours and not re-enter for six months. Whatever Muslim population there was they tried to organise them. They worked hard and devoted their time, but it was not a very enlightened period for politics.

In 1946 when the Muslim Conference started the agitation in Srinagar for the Pakistan movement they decided that Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas should not court arrest. They wanted him to remain outside jail and carry on with their work, but he did not listen. He joined Agha Shaukat Ali, Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah and Maulvi Muhammad Noordin to court arrest in a Civil Disobedience campaign as members of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and went to jail. He had refused to accept the advice of Quaid-i-Azam in 1946 when he met him in Delhi that he should not go to jail at the time of the 'Quit Kashmir' movement—the Quaid said all Muslims should remain united under the Muslim League. Abbas was released in March, 1948, while Agha Shaukat and the others were released in 1949 and came to Pakistan.

Before 1947 both Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas genuinely worked for the awakening of the people. They carried a message of freedom to different parts of the State, fully

organised people to create political consciousness in them, preparing them for sacrifices, at a time when in the State they had no press, no propaganda material, no transport. In those days it was very courageous to achieve what they did.

After arrival in Pakistan Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was appointed to look after refugees. He was put in charge of the Kashmir Refugees Committee set up by Quaid-i-Azam, but which did not prove very effective. He was made Supreme Head of the Azad Kashmir Government and then started intriguing against Sardar Ibrahim Khan, against whom he had grievances and got him removed temporarily from the Presidentship of Azad Kashmir in 1950. Then Sardar Ibrahim formed his own party, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Ibrahim Group.

He tried to re-organise the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in Azad Kashmir and received an allowance for this from the Pakistan Government. However, in this he was not successful because he was now out of Jammu to which he was used and here in Pakistan there were other issues. Problems were multiplying. Now there were thousands of refugees living in various camps. He tried to introduce an administration in Azad Kashmir. The Muslim Conference continued to function through different Presidents, but he was their acknowledged leader. However, he was not an imaginative person. In Jammu and Kashmir he had been leader of the Muslim movement which wanted to be with Pakistan but were under the Dogra rule so they had a difficult role to play. But here in Pakistan the Azad Kashmir Government was already established, the nature and role of the struggle had changed and all this required a man of imagination and certain spirit and missionary zeal for taking advantage of the new situation and he was not capable of this. He should have re-organised the political movement according to the different circumstances so as to bring Kashmir politics to that level to which it had gone earlier. But this required an intellectual enlightenment which was not in him.

In fact in Pakistan, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was unable to help refugees or control the Jammu and Kashmir Conference or help the Pakistan Government to solve the Kashmir problem. He was essentially a weak man and not generous minded, for several people have said that he was the prime figure in giving Quaid-i-Azam an unfavourable impression of Sheikh Abdullah, particularly in the 1945-47 period. He was offered various posts in Pakistan which he refused for he said:

"The Kashmir question will be considered finished if I take up an assignment as a *Pakistani*!"

The most dramatic action of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas' career in Pakistan was his formation of the Kashmir Liberation Front, at the time of the release in January, 1958 from Kud jail and then re-arrest in April of the same year of Sheikh Abdullah. This created a strong reaction in Pakistan and there was a country-wide demand for action. The Kashmir Liberation movement was started with the slogan "*Kashmir Chalo*", with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas as President and Justice M. Y. Saraf as Secretary General. At that time Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan was for the second time President of the Azad Kashmir Government. From the beginning of the creation of Azad Kashmir there had been various warring political groups and tussles between them with a change of regime after every two years or so, but this was the one momentous occasion when there was unity between all, which showed that despite the division of the two Kashmirs through the Cease-Fire Line, such division had never been accepted by the *Kashmiris*. Thousands of *Kashmiris* participated in demonstrations and hundreds were arrested in Azad Kashmir. Meetings were held in Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Jhelum and Sialkot.

Abbas gathered together various leaders of Azad Kashmir such as Sardar Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Justice Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, K. H. Khurshid and organised the march, the object of which was to liberate the *Kashmiris* in held Kashmir. During the march to Muzaffarabad he himself was arrested, along with two ex-Presidents of Azad Kashmir, Colonel Sher Ahmed Khan and Sardar Abdul Qaiyum Khan and a veteran worker from the 1931 days in Kashmir, a colleague of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas—A. R. Saghar. Because of the grave international repercussions which could have been caused by this movement the Pakistan Government banned it.

Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, one of the political leaders in Pakistan who condemned the arrest of Abbas and who had also been a class-fellow of Sheikh Abdullah in 1925 in Islamia College, Lahore, commented that it was an irony of fate that Sheikh Abdullah was imprisoned in an Indian jail while Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, who had supported the Accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan was detained in a Pakistan jail. With the promulgation of Martial Law in Pakistan in October, 1958 all the detainees were released.

By 1964, after Sheikh Abdullah had been released from nearly eleven years' detention and came to Pakistan for discussions with President Muhammad Ayub Khan, Abbas decided to patch up his differences with him. He had an emotional reunion in Rawalpindi with Sheikh Abdullah on his arrival at the airport, going right up into the plane to embrace him and also presided over the huge public meeting held in Liaquat Gardens in Rawalpindi on May 25th, 1964, in addition to having a separate four-five hours' discussion with him late at night, away from the Pakistan Intelligence people, by whom Sheikh Abdullah was surrounded, which meeting was arranged by his son-in-law, Khalid Mahmud.

* * * * *

Abdul Mannan Khalifa, who was born in Jammu and knew Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas from early days because of the association of his father, Khalifa Abdul Rahim with him, has written two or three books on Kashmir. He had his early education in Jammu and Srinagar and then earned his B.Sc. in Engineering from the College of Engineering in Lahore in 1942. In Jammu and then in Srinagar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas' younger brother, Zubair, was Mannan's teacher and after both had qualified from Lahore Engineering College they became Assistant Engineers in Kashmir until 1947. In a meeting in Lahore in December, 1984 with me, Khalifa Abdul Mannan said:

"Sheikh Abdullah met Quaid-i-Azam early in 1938 and asked him to help the cause of the Muslims of Kashmir, but the Quaid replied that he could not interfere in the affairs of the State. But Nehru when asked, being more of a politician and less of a lawyer, replied:

'We can help you to get rid of the *Maharaja* but only on a national platform'.

"It was after this that the National Conference was started, in which Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas also participated for a while."

It is significant that Nehru first began to take an interest in Kashmir in 1940, which was when the All India Muslim League Resolution on Pakistan was passed in March of that year in Lahore. In May he visited Kashmir as a guest of the National Conference. There was a reception committee organised by G. M. Sadiq and

Prem Nath Bazaz, but the actual organising work was done by Sheikh Abdullah and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad. Nehru toured the Valley for ten days and the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference came into the limelight in India. All the leading Congress journals of India sent representatives to report the visit.

Mannan continued:

"My grandfather, Khalifa Nuruddin, was a sort of *guru* to Chaudhry Nawab Din, the father of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. My father, Khalifa Abdul Rahim, was a very close friend of Abbas, who wrote about him on his death:

'*Khalifa sahib* was like a thermometer in my political life and I usually went to him for my assessment. I have lost in him an assessor I always valued, death has taken him away.'

"Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas' best friend was Abdul Majid Qarshi, also of Jammu and editor of "*Tarjaman*", one of the oldest Kashmir Liberation Fighters, who worked with Abbas and who came to Pakistan after partition, where he died in Sialkot."

Mannan said that when Ghulam Abbas was released from Jammu jail and reached Pakistan early in 1948, he went to Karachi together with Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan to see Quaid-i-Azam, who is reported to have said:

'We have lost Kashmir and we cannot have Kashmir. All I can now do is to support the Kashmir refugees.'

It was then that the Kashmir Refugees Council was formed, of which all the Provincial Chief Ministers were members, as well as Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister. Mannan continued:

"After Abbas' arrival he was staying in Lahore with Mian Bashir Ahmed, where I met him. He said to me:

'Somehow send a message to your father, Khalifa Abdul Rahim to get hold of my manuscript, "*Khash-m-Khash*" and have it restored to me for publication here.'

"This book was written while he was in jail in Jammu but he was not allowed to bring his papers out of the jail with him.

"In my opinion Abbas was basically a weak man, with no strong personality and he could not lead. He was also unfortunate in his married life, as he and his wife, Zakia, always had clashes of temperament. In Pakistan he was unhappy and could not adjust himself to the changed situation."

He died in Rawalpindi on December, 18th, 1967 of cancer, after having gone to London for treatment, to which his illness did not respond. In Azad Kashmir he is called "*Quaid-i-Kashmir*".

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ALLAH RAKHAR SAGHAR

I was fortunate to be able to interview Mr. Allah Rakhar Saghar at his residence in Rawalpindi on 6th January, 1985. He and Abdul Majid Qarshi were two of the oldest workers in the Kashmir Freedom Struggle and worked with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas from the Jammu province. At first when I wrote to him he demurred, saying that he was now too old and nearly blind and that *Qarshi's* son, Qayyum *Qarshi* could be more useful in giving me the information I wanted. However, I assured him that people more than his age of 74 years were still doing useful work wherever they were and I must have the honour of meeting one of the earliest workers in the Freedom movement against the *Dogra raj*. One or two of the leaders of his calibre of the early years are still alive on the other side of the Cease-Fire Line, such as Maulana Masoodi, Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara, but on this side he is the only one still living.

So Mr. Qayyum Qarshi took me to his house. It is one of the old type of pre-1947 houses with large rooms, high ceilings, verandahs and a family courtyard. From here Saghar's son runs the family paper business.

As Saghar did not marry until 1940 he did not have the problem of growing children missing the care of a father in their sensitive years while he was involved in politics. He has five educated daughters and one son. Here is his story:

Allah Rakhar Saghar was born on March 5th, 1910 in Jammu, where he was educated. While still in his teens he, like Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and some of the freedom fighters of that period left education and jumped into the national movement. By hard and dedicated work he soon became one of the front line leaders in the Freedom movement. He was one of the top ranking Muslim leaders from Jammu.

He was involved in the Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu from 1927, when he was still a teenager. At first this association was meant for social work, not politics. Talab Teeka Masjid was its centre of operation. Then because of propaganda on the part of the authorities the association was labelled as a political organisation and the Government employees who were members resigned in 1928.

Sardar Gauhar Rahman was then the President of the Association while Saghar and Sher Ghulam Qadir were the main support behind it. Together they presented six demands to the Government:

- (1) That the law should be repealed by which any Hindu converting to Islam had his property confiscated.
- (2) The law on cow-slaughter, giving a punishment of 12 years in jail, should be repealed.
- (3) Return to the Muslims of their mosques which were being utilised by the Government for non-religious purposes.
- (4) Although Muslim *abadis* were more in number yet only 3-4% jobs were given to this community. The demand was that Muslims should be given jobs in accordance with their population percentage.
- (5) There should be freedom of speech and press.
- (6) A responsible government was demanded.

As a group they were so firm and united that all their demands were met.

After the firings and uprisings in Srinagar of 13th July, 1931 and the publicity given to them all over India, a meeting was convened in Simla on 25th July, at Fair View, attended by leading Muslims, convened by Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, and on the initiative of Allama Iqbal, to form an All India Kashmir Committee to campaign for the grievances of the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir. Allah Rakhar Saghar represented Jammu province in this meeting.

In July, 1931, the riots in Srinagar and Jammu, A. R. Saghar and Sheikh Abdul Haly went to Lahore to contact Muslim newspapers and report what was happening. Abdul Majid Salik of "*Inquilab*" took them to meet Syed Mohsin Shah, himself exiled from Kashmir for his earlier political participation and Allama Iqbal. After the firings in Srinagar there were demonstrations in Jammu, in which Saghar participated. On August 18th, he was arrested along with his father, Chaudhry Hukam Din and the father of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Chaudhry Nawabdin, but they were soon released,

while Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas were sent to Hari Parbat Fort.

Then the Ahrar movement started in October, 1931 from the Punjab for doing propaganda against the Dogra rule and the people of Jammu worked along with them. They sent "*jathas*" of volunteers from Punjab to Jammu to create disaffection against the Government and 4,500 volunteers at a time came. Disturbances spread to various parts of the State, resentment was growing day by day.

In 1934 Saghar was given 4 months' imprisonment when many people offered themselves for arrest in Jammu and Srinagar in the Civil Disobedience movement launched by Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas regarding the non-implementation of the Glancy Commission recommendations of 1931.

Both *Saghar* and *Qarshi* were opposed to the change in the name of Muslim Conference to All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in the 6th Annual Muslim Conference of March 25th—27th, 1938. Then on 26th June, 1938 its Working Committee met to discuss the recommendations of the changing of the name. *Qarshi* opposed it and was asked to resign but did not.

On August 29th, 1938 Saghar was arrested in Jammu for participation in the Responsible Government Demand Day and was jailed for 6 months.

In a meeting of 30th March, 1939 at Mujahid Manzil, Srinagar, he said that the questions which had been agitating the minds of the Jammu people had been satisfactorily answered by Kashmir Valley leaders and they were now in agreement with the proposed change in name of the Conference. On 10th June, 1939 both Abbas and Saghar attended the special session of the Muslim Conference and supported the Working Committee resolution to rename the Party as All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. *Saghar* also spoke:

"We should not use religion in a manner that creates difficulties in our day to day life. Nationalism is the cry of the time and those who do not need it will repent in future."¹

In September, 1939 the State Assembly was formed. *Saghar*, although elected, was disallowed to be a member because of his imprisonment in 1938. Up to 1939 *Saghar* was with the National

Conference and was a member of its Working Committee. Then when the Muslim Conference was revived in 1942 he was with it and was then Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas' right hand man. He was then General Secretary of the Conference. He was also a member of the Jammu and Kashmir Press Conference along with D. P. Dhar, Janki Nath and Pandit Zutshi.

In 1940 *Saghar* was interned within municipal limits for one year and in 1942 on tour to Kotli and Mirpur he, along with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, was served with a notice to leave within 24 hours and non-entry for 6 months.

In 1944 as a top-ranking journalist he became editor-cum-proprietor of the non-official weekly organ of the Muslim Conference, "*Javed*".

In spite of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, editor of "*Zamindar*" being a Muslim Leaguer by 1930, Kashmir leaders always received support from him and his papers in their nationalist struggle. Sheikh Abdullah, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah, Sardar Gauhar Rahman and A. R. Saghar were very close to him. In fact he even wrote a poem on Saghar in which he appreciated his qualities as a journalist and his gift of oratory.

In 1945 efforts were made by several people to bring the National Conference and Muslim Conference closer and to start talks, and to resolve differences between Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. *Saghar* was negotiating on behalf of the Muslim Conference, but as he had never been popular with the *Kashmiri*-speaking Muslims and disliked both them and Sheikh Abdullah he was the wrong person to have been chosen for the discussions, which did not resolve anything. However, in spite of being anti-Abdullah, in our meeting of January 6th, 1985 he, as well as *Qarshi's* son were emphatic in stating that Sheikh Abdullah did not put his signature to the Deed of Accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh, on October 26th, 1947, from Jammu.

Whenever the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League used to meet in Delhi Saghar and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas used to be specially invited by Quaid-i-Azam. *Saghar* said that from the beginning of the Pakistan movement he was in favour of the two-nation theory and was with Quaid-i-Azam in supporting it.

On 30th November, 1945 Saghar was served with a notice forbidding the making of a public speech for 3 months.

When the Quit Kashmir movement started in May, 1946 and Sheikh Abdullah was arrested he went to Lahore with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas to consult newspapers and elicit their support. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, D. P. Dhar and G. M. Sadiq were already there. Then, in spite of Quaid-i-Azam's advice and the wishes of the Muslim Conference he, along with other Muslim Conference members courted arrest in Srinagar and was jailed. He was released in 1949, when he came to Pakistan. After arrest he was first in the notorious Kathua Jail, where he had Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz as a companion, who was also confined there, then in January, 1948 he was transferred to Jammu Jail, where Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was also, until he was released in March, 1948 and sent to Pakistan.

Back in Pakistan in 1949, having earlier been Abbas' right hand man in the Freedom movement he again worked with him. When Abbas formed the Kashmir Liberation Front in Azad Kashmir in 1958, at the time of the release and then re-arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in the Kashmir State, he worked with him and was arrested with him. Being released earlier he took on the responsibility of the movement until all the leaders were set free in October of that year.

So now in the twilight of his years Saghar can look back with satisfaction to the part he played in the earliest years of Kashmir's Freedom struggle, working in Jammu province where, because of the large Hindu population and the fundamentalist middle-class Muslims, the struggle was harder. He is the last of the three leaders from Jammu—Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Abdul Majid Qarshi and he, now mild and serene in his old age.

REFERENCE

- ¹ Bazaz, Pandit Prem Nath, "*The Story of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*", Kashmir Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1954.

ABDUL MAJEED QARSHI

In January, 1985 it was a pleasure to meet Mr. Qayyum Qureshi in Rawalpindi, the son of one of Sheikh Abdullah's oldest and most respected political associates, Abdul Majeed Qarshi of Jammu.

Abdul Majeed Qarshi was born in 1907 in Jammu, educated there and joined Prince of Wales College, Jammu. He then joined Government service and started participating in politics. From the early twenties he, along with others of his department collected material regarding the meagre representation of Muslims in the State services for publication in the Lahore Muslim press. In Jammu province he worked with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan and Allah Rakhar Saghar. He first came into contact with Sheikh Abdullah in 1930 and then Muslims of Jammu and the Valley decided to co-operate and co-ordinate their campaign. *Qarshi* worked along with other volunteers with Sheikh Abdullah in the All India Kashmir Committee agitation. This was when the entry of "*Inquilab*" into the State was banned.

When Muslim Conference changed into National Conference, *Qarshi* was one of those who at first opposed the resolution of 28th June, 1938 and was asked to resign, but did not.

Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas decided with Sheikh Abdullah to change over, but the Jammu people who had been mostly educated in Aligarh, where the movement had already started for a platform for Muslims, could not tolerate this change. They made Muslim League members in Jammu, where the organisation became very popular.

Abbas then had no influence and decided to break away from the National Conference and revive Muslim Conference, although he also had a considerable following in the Valley. It was *Qarshi* who acted as a mediator between Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, who eventually re-started the Muslim Conference along with Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah in 1942. *Qarshi* was one of those who revived the Muslim Conference, although he tried hard to re-unite the two parties up to the last minute. He had become a link between the two.

After the formation of the Muslim Conference in 1932 a Committee was set up to contact non-Muslim leaders to seek their

co-operation in the movement that may next be launched against the Government. *Qarshi* was included in this committee, which was unable to achieve any positive results because of the non-Muslims' non-co-operation.

Qarshi worked as a State correspondent of "*Inquilab*" of Lahore. It was because of his contributions to papers in the Punjab about the political conditions in Kashmir after the national movement began in 1931 that he lost his job and then started a weekly, "*Jamhoor*", from Jammu. This paper had one aim, to bring Muslim Conference and National Conference together, for as he said:

'The welfare of the State lies in the unity of both the parties'.

During the period of those riots starting in 1931 *Qarshi* used to smuggle news posters printed in Sialkot and Lahore into the State, where they were distributed all over the Valley. One of the methods used was to stuff them into the spare tyres of lorries transporting goods!

Qarshi was one of the most valuable contributors to Muslim newspapers of the Punjab. Mr. Abdul Majid Salik has written of him in "*Sarguzasht*", p. 336:

"*Qarshi* was one of the prominent political workers from Jammu and actively participated in every movement side by side with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan and A. R. Saghar. He was the most prominent representative of "*Daily Inquilab*" in the State and I have no hesitation in saying that whatever he wrote in the columns of my paper on Kashmir was the best example of honest and balanced journalism."¹

I asked Mr. Qayyum about his remembrances of his father and his political work. He said:

"In 1932, when I was four years old, is my first remembrance of my father when the authorities came to arrest him. As a family we did not suffer the loss of a father being absent in jail or involved in politics because we had a joint family system and had uncles and an aunt to look after us. My father's younger brother, who was a Superintendent of Police in the State police supported us when my father was in jail. I was always proud of my father's role.

"I remember that I was ten years' old in 1937-38 when my father was in jail. Sheikh Abdullah saw me passing along the road in Jammu. After half an hour he arrived at our home and talked to my mother and said how depressed he was to find one of his best workers in a difficult position. He apologised to her, gave her some money and said:

'Whenever you need more just let me know.'

Similarly in 1948 when at the Srinagar Airport, Sheikh Abdullah learnt that one of his workers was very ill, he went straight from the airport to see him. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, in spite of other good qualities did not have this rapport with his workers. This was the big difference between the two leaders. Mr. Qayyum continued:

"I was a fourth year student in Jammu College when my father went to Srinagar for journalistic work and received the message from Sheikh Abdullah through Maulana Masoodi to proceed to Lahore immediately and join G. M. Sadiq in the discussions with Pakistan Muslim Leaguers in October, 1947, and see that the talks were on no account broken off. My father was told:

'Seven or eight days have elapsed and no news has been received from G. M. Sadiq. Use the influence of Abdul Majeed Salik and Ghulam Rasool Meher, who have been close to us since 1931.'"

Because of his own traumatic experience Mr. Qayyum was very conscious of the fact that Sheikh Abdullah was the victim of circumstances and was forced to go along with the decision of the *Maharaja* of Jammu and Kashmir to join India because of what was happening to the Muslims of Jammu province at that time. From the end of September, 1947 Sikhs and Hindus from West Punjab were arriving in Jammu with their stories of massacres taking place there. In retaliation the same pattern was started in Jammu by the *Dogras* and *Sikhs*. *Qarshi* had gone to Srinagar to contact National Conference leaders, while the family was in Jammu. The Jammu border had been sealed off. Muslims were rounded up in hundreds from various areas and taken to an open place and ordered to board buses, which were supposed to take them to Sialkot. But a few miles outside Jammu they were massacred. This was the time when the dreaded Mehr Chand Mahajan was Prime Minister.

Mr. Qayyum related:

"I was put on a bus of a convoy which left on the 6th November and when the same pattern was repeated I was able to jump off the roof of the bus and hide. Then all of us survivors of the massacre were taken to a camp, where we lived in miserable conditions for about ten days, when Sheikh Abdullah arrived from Srinagar, having received news of what had happened. He met us and personally conducted us all to Jammu."

Both Mr. Qayyum and Mr. Saghar, who was present in the same interview were emphatically of the opinion that Sheikh Abdullah was never reconciled to Accession to India. He had to go along with the *Maharaja's* decision, otherwise the Muslim population of Jammu would have been finished off. They were also emphatic that he did not sign the Deed of Accession, despatched by the *Maharaja* from Jammu and handed to Mr. V. P. Menon, Secretary of the States Department, who had come from Delhi by air to collect it.

From Jammu Mr. Qayyum said he went to Srinagar, where an aunt and uncle were living. The uncle was a lecturer in Sri Partap College. He began working for "*Qidmat*", the paper of the National Conference and in July, 1948 left for Pakistan with his family. He settled in Rawalpindi, where he runs a TV *Kashmiri* programme and a newspaper, "*Tarjuman-i-Kashmir*".

Mr. Qayyum emphasised that by making the Kashmir dispute a permanent item on the U.N. agenda for many years and by persistently raising the demand for a solution of the dispute through an impartial plebiscite Sheikh Abdullah became such a beloved leader of his people.

As a final assessment of *Qarshi* one can conclude that in 1947 he was an independent journalist, editor of "*Jamhoor*" of Jammu, representing "*Nawai Waqt*" and "*Inquilab*" of Lahore. As a loyal political worker he was one of the few people in Kashmir who received the regard of those in every walk of life. That is why he was known as the bridge between the politicians of Jammu and Kashmir. That is why he could be so trusted by Sheikh Abdullah that he was asked to be present in the meeting held in Majestic Hotel on October 2nd, 1947 between Dr. Taseer from Pakistan and G. M. Sadiq, Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara, Mirza Afzal Beg and Sheikh Abdullah.

In Pakistan *Qarshi* retired to Sialkot where, at the age of 72 years he died in 1975.

SYED MIR MUHAMMAD QASIM

On the 15th September, 1983 at the press conference in Delhi where he announced his resignation from Congress (I) Mir Qasim said:

"I consider that my handing over of power to Sheikh Abdullah in 1975 was the greatest achievement in my life."

Syed Mir Muhammad Qasim was the former Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir from 1972-75, the man who had stepped aside from what had become a thankless task in troubled times for the comeback in 1975 of Sheikh Abdullah as Chief Minister after the signing of the Kashmir Accord, when all the progressive forces in India were aware that the discontent and law and order situation in Kashmir had deteriorated over the last twenty-two years to the extent that it was only the return of Sheikh Abdullah to power which could pull the various factions together.

I had considered that I had secured a real coup in obtaining an interview on September 13th, 1983 with Mir Qasim at his home in Srinagar, just two days before he had severed connections with Congress (I) and Mrs. Gandhi—a connection of nearly forty years' standing—until I realised that practically every newspaper and magazine in India had been seeking and obtaining interviews with him from the beginning of September onwards and speculating:

"Will he, won't he resign?"

"Will Indira meet him, or not?"

I myself counted twenty-three English interviews, *plus* three editorials of top newspapers. There were personal interviews in magazines of two-three pages, in newspapers full page coverages by journalists such as Udayayam Sharma, S. B. Kaul, Tavleen Singh, K. Gopalakrishnan, Shukhatiata Bhattacraya, Nikhil Chakravarty and others. It seemed that Mir Qasim was very keen to justify his long considered action in print and the press to give him publicity.

Quitting the party in power with such a flourish was something unusual in Indian politics. Syed Mir Qasim, a member of the Parliamentary Board and Working Committee of the Congress (I) finally decided to end his four decades' association with the Congress and the Nehrus on September 15th.

My friend, Mian Ghulam Sarwar had been promising for some time to obtain this interview for me, but it seems I did not take entirely seriously his claim that he could get this politician of four decades' connection with the Congress to meet me, because when he arrived to pick me up in his car, although I took my notebook I left my camera behind!

How had I become important enough to be inducted into such distinguished company? Ah, now it clicked in my mind. The angle with me was a different one. He talked of his student days, which no other interviewer had bothered about. He said he had first come into contact with Sheikh Abdullah in 1939.

Unassuming, a soft voice, mild mannered, but with the quick darting glance of the seasoned politician, he played the first hand of the game by informing me that it was my husband who was the impetus of his first entry into student politics when, in September, 1941 a group of students of one community had staged a procession against having a *Punjabi* (non-Kashmiri) Principal appointed to Sri Partap College, of which he was then a student. He and Dr. Ashraf Ali (now Professor and Dean of the Faculty of the University of Kashmir and former Commissioner of Education, Jammu and Kashmir) who became one of my husband's favourite students, organised a counter-protest meeting, while Sheikh Abdullah made a speech appropriate to the occasion at Amira Kadal. Then I recalled that particular incident, which happened just before our family left Amritsar at the end of September, 1941 for Srinagar, where my husband was to take up his new appointment.

Mir Qasim talked quickly while he smoked continuously, explaining himself while not giving me an opportunity for any questions. He said:

"I became a member of the National Congress in 1944 from Verinag. In 1945-46 I was a student in Aligarh. I was a member of National Congress and my friends, Maqbool Shehzad and Ghiasuddin also. Someone reported that I was Indian National Congress and the University Vice-Chancellor began to harass me. Then I became influenced by Leftist politics" (actually he was the spearhead of the Communist Students' Movement). "The policy of the Communist Party of India at that time was to support the Muslim League, so I supported the Muslim League also. I was the President of Aligarh Students' Union in

1945 and 1946. Then I wrote to Khawaja Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara to ask if I should support the Quit Kashmir movement. I met him underground and then went to jail in 1946-47, along with Sardar Budh Singh. We were both given six months. I was President of the National Conference sub-division, then I resigned and was expelled from the National Conference in 1948."

Mir Qasim had joined the Congress Party before the Quit India Movement of 1942. He had served as a member of the Constituent Assembly, as Chief Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of a number of portfolios before serving the Party as Jammu and Kashmir P.C.C. (I) President, 1965-71. Then he was Minister for Planning and from 1972-75 Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1975 he went to the Rajya Sabha and ended his Parliamentary term in 1979.

The differences between the Congress (I) President and the Kashmir leader go back some years. While as Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi remained suspicious of Sheikh Abdullah and saw that she kept him unsure of his position, Mir Qasim was convinced that the *Sheikh* could be trusted and that in any case his strength in the Valley was such as to leave New Delhi no choice but to keep him in good humour. Mrs. Gandhi, however, gave her support to those ill advised members of the State unit of Congress (I) who believed they could challenge the National Conference and misled Mrs. Gandhi against the *Sheikh* from 1975 onwards.

When I met him Mir Qasim said that Mrs. Gandhi had not so far agreed to meet him to discuss.

"A process of collective thinking and action."

Mir Qasim amplified that in his opinion political leaders within the Congress (I) are not fighting communalism with the same vigour as they used to do, awareness is no longer in the Congress. Secularism is the base of India, without that base one cannot be socialistic. That is what has kept us together and without secularism and socialism one cannot remain a democracy. In a democratic institution a man at any level, it may be district *pradesh* working committee, parliamentary board, he must have the feeling that his suggestions are seriously considered and after serious consideration accepted or rejected. Unfortunately this is not happening.

I asked:

"But what about the politics of your own state? Where will be your allegiance."

"I will be with the party which supports the policy of the late Sheikh Abdullah."

"You mean you will be with Dr. Farooq Abdullah?"

"Yes."

Then I remembered that only two days earlier Mr. G. M. Shah, brother-in-law of Dr. Farooq, who had begun to hold mini-press conferences under a tree in his garden, just below my room in the next door house of his mother-in-law, had made one or two beligerent statements to the effect that he was still in the National Conference, no-one could turn him out and when Dr. Farooq and his colleagues ceased to be less immature in their politics he would again meet with them on a common platform. So how would Mir Qasim allign himself? With Dr. Farooq or his opponent, Mr. G. M. Shah? Which way would fulfil his ambition, for obviously he must have some, considering that he had given up what was morally his position in 1975, i.e. Prime Ministership of Jammu and Kashmir, at the behest of Mrs. Gandhi when, as he said:

"In the Kashmir Accord Sheikh Abdullah was co-operating with us (Congress (I)) at every step but we were not co-operating with him. The Kashmir Accord was the result of a national consensus of parties like C.P.I., C.P.I.(M) of people like Shri Jaya Parkash Narayan, Shri H. N. Bahaguna, Chandra Shekhar, Bhupesh Gupta, Sajjad Zaheer, Harkishan Singh Surjeet."

He complained bitterly about the Centre's continuing hostility towards Dr. Farooq's government.

A politician of his stature would justifiably expect to be given an interview for discussion if he had a positive contribution but Mrs. Gandhi did not show Mir Qasim the courtesy of meeting him, even if she already felt that the parting of the ways was inevitable. Incidentally he was the one Congress member who remained loyal to Mrs. Gandhi at the critical time when she split her party into two to form the Congress (I).

With such a background and history it must have been a difficult decision for Mir Qasim to leave a party to which he had given the whole of his political life. It is obvious that from the time he took before actually resigning he was forced by his conscience to leave.

I asked Mir Qasim what would now be his role. On the day I met him he said although he would resign from Congress (I) he would remain as a member of the Central Parliamentary Board in which he would continue to play his role, but this apparently did not work out.

I asked Mir Qasim:

"Which party do you feel you can work with, in which direction do you see yourself going?"

"I will not go in a direction, I hope I will be able to provide some direction. I mean that those friends who are working, I will suggest to them how we can work as a team, that those things which led me to this bitter experience should not be repeated in any other place where I go. I will have no truck with organisations where secularism and socialism are compromised."

I continued:

"You are going to stay by your stand of not actually joining the United Front but just working with them?"

"No, not joining."

I asked:

"Why not joining?"

He replied:

"Because this is a front of various parties. Why are they keeping the parties alive? That means there is some confused thinking. I will help my colleagues in the direction of a common programme. At the national level my importance will be if I can be the messenger of all my colleagues and get them to sit together and discuss together, that is a great thing."

I queried:

"But with a political party behind you it would be more effective than one man."

His reply:

"Do you think I will remain one man?"

He appeared genuinely concerned with the preservation of values in the country's public life. He said:

"I do not want power, I simply want to save the country from an impending disaster and uphold the traditions and ideals of great men produced by this country. I believe in secularism, democracy and socialism. The leaders who believe in these should now come together and form one Front and work to solve the problems of our country, especially of unemployment and minorities, handling of the Punjab crisis, the Assam situation, of Kashmir. I had tried to give my counsel on these things but I was not listened to. In my State the minorities are *Kashmiri Pandits* in the Valley, Muslims in Jammu, Buddhists in Kargil and from 1977 onwards Indira's Congress (I) withdrew its support from Sheikh Abdullah's Government and especially in the last State Elections of 1983, when they decided to confront the National Conference.

"Sheikh Abdullah sacrificed his life for his ideals and never got trapped into the narrow politics of reactionary forces either before or after Independence."

But Mir Qasim said he would not join the National Conference as he was not interested in regional politics as such, but he was "with them". He is now a member of the Opposition party, the Democratic Socialist Party of H. N. Bahuguna of West Bengal, which means he is committed to working with the Opposition on a Union level.

It was not long after my meeting with Mir Qasim and his resignation from Congress (I) that the Third Opposition Conclave was held in Srinagar from October 3rd—5th, in which he was given due importance at the meetings which were held in camera. At the massive public meeting on October 5th held in the Exhibition Grounds, Srinagar, at the conclusion of the Conclave, other delegates spoke in Urdu, but he stole the hearts of the audience and drew the greatest applause by speaking in *Kashmiri*!

GHULAM MUHAMMAD SHAH, SON-IN-LAW OF SHEIKH MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH

The result of the sordid drama of the imposition of Ghulam Muhammad Shah's Puppet Government in Jammu and Kashmir in June, 1984, by Congress (I) has been that the alienation between Jammu Region and the Kashmir Valley has been widened.

After Dr. Farooq Abdullah's legally elected Government had been evicted Begum Abdullah said in an interview:

"What she (Mrs. Gandhi) is doing is not good. We are not a pack of fools that we don't understand. She is tearing away our people following the policy of divide and rule. Hatred and communalism are being spread, our *Kashmiri* brotherhood is being torn apart. But we shall show that we are united."

Early in 1984 when Congress (I) began their campaign against Farooq through Pradesh President Chief, Mufti Sayeed and G. M. Shah she also said:

"Shah was responsible for precipitating the *Sheikh's* death. He was greatly upset on his death bed with *Shah's* actions causing cracks in the unity of the family."

Although I had met his wife, Khalida, his daughter and youngest son in Sheikh Abdullah's house in Srinagar in 1980 and 1981, I first met Ghulam Muhammad Shah, son-in-law of *Sheikh sahib* in June, 1982, when I had gone to Srinagar in order to visit Sheikh Abdullah, who had just had the massive heart attack from which he was destined not to recover. At that time *Sheikh sahib's* condition had not stabilised, doctors were coming and going, all the family were collected in one room or other of the house, crowds of politicians and well wishers flooded the lawns outside. *Shah* was always present, wearing his dark glasses, pacing up and down outside *Sheikh sahib's* room, with a tense expression on his otherwise deadpan face. Short in stature, with no charisma, the press said of him that he was hot-headed, stubborn, arrogant, with a sense of self-importance, but a tough man with lots of brains.

In July and August, after I had left, Sheikh Abdullah's health continued to decline but still he held five Cabinet meetings, mostly in his house, up to the end of August, at which he exhorted his

Ministers to remain united. G. M. Shah sulked and refused to attend these meetings and finally tendered his resignation as Minister for Power and Works. All this tension had its effect on Sheikh Abdullah. He expired on the evening of September 8th. On the morning of the 9th, it is said, a large and violent crowd rushed into the house on Maulana Azad Road demanding the whereabouts of G. M. Shah and crying:

"He has killed our *Sheikh sahib*. We want him."

Police had to rush him into hiding and then he left Srinagar for Pune, for three months, from which place he used to go to Delhi to visit Mrs. Gandhi.

In the last days of Sheikh Abdullah the question of who was to be his successor came to the forefront. In January, 1981 at a mammoth meeting of 15,000 at Hazrat Bal, Sheikh Abdullah had announced his intention to the congregation to groom his son, Dr. Farooq as his successor and secured their approval. Then in August, 1981 he had appointed him as his successor in the post of President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

Because of his long record of service, G. M. Shah, ambitious and shrewd, had hoped to succeed Sheikh Abdullah but he came to understand that he was not trusted by his own father-in-law in his last days, and was now on the lookout for support from the Congress (I) in order to challenge Farooq. Farooq was sworn in as the new Chief Minister in a special Cabinet meeting on the evening of September 8th, 1982 by the then Governor, Mr. B. K. Nehru with, it was known, the blessings of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

It was when I returned to Srinagar in October for the "*Chehlum*" of Sheikh Abdullah that I learnt that when Mrs. Indira Gandhi paid a 3-4 days' visit to Srinagar earlier in June, ostensibly to enquire about *Sheikh sahib's* health, she had met the leaders of all the political parties and had specially said to G. M. Shah that he should keep in touch with her, for she understood that a man with a grievance would be useful to her in strengthening the hold of her Congress (I) Party on Jammu and Kashmir before the forthcoming 1983 State Elections. By the time I arrived Shah had left for Pune and the family were tight lipped about his absence.

G. M. Shah, the son-in-law of Sheikh Abdullah, who comes from

a Srinagar family, joined Sheikh Abdullah in his political work after obtaining his degree in law from Aligarh University in 1946. He was arrested with Sheikh Abdullah in May, 1946, in the Quit Kashmir movement. He was later nominated as a member of the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly, being with Sheikh Abdullah's group, the other being that of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and his brother.

He was chosen by *Sheikh sahib* and his wife as being a suitable match for their elder daughter, Khalida, whom he married in 1948. Who could at that time have predicted the ultimate result! An elder brother of his, Ali Shah, remained with Sheikh Abdullah in every movement of his. He joined Government service and in 1947 was Rationing Controller in Srinagar and was later appointed as Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. Another elder brother was a member of the National Conference.

When Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and arrested in August, 1953 he was arrested along with him, released on parole in November, 1958 and re-arrested in April, 1959.

In January, 1964 a movement was launched by Maulana Masudi over the theft in December, 1963 of the Holy Hair (*Moe-e-Muqaddas*) from Hazrat Bal Shrine, in Srinagar. G. M. Shah joined the movement, which demanded amongst other things the release of Sheikh Abdullah from jail. By the time he was released Dr. Farooq had come on the scene, a qualified M.B.,B.S. and holding down a job. When Sheikh Abdullah brought him in his delegation in May, 1964 to Pakistan for discussions and not G. M. Shah, who had so much political background and had worked with Sheikh Abdullah since 1946 Shah's resentment started.

When Sheikh Abdullah was arrested by the Indian Government in 1965 on his return to India from his tour abroad, G. M. Shah was externed from the State. He was allowed to return only in 1972 when Sheikh Abdullah also returned from externment in Delhi. *Shah's* wife, Khalida suffered along with her mother and younger sister and brothers during the time of the incarcerations and banishments from the State of her husband along with her father.

Dr. Farooq returned from U.K. in 1974 where he had been practising medicine to settle and when Sheikh Abdullah returned to power in 1975 *Shah* was appointed Minister for Works and Power, in which post he was widely said to have been very corrupt, but still

his father-in-law tolerated him. He was later inducted as a member of the Cabinet after the Elections of 1977.

G. M. Shah quite logically had assumed that after the death in 1981 of the other possible contestant, Mirza Afzal Beg, he had a reasonable expectation of being appointed Chief Minister of the State after Sheikh Abdullah. However, Sheikh Abdullah had other plans, it seemed. Already in 1978 because of false rumours from Delhi about his relationship with people there Mirza Afzal Beg had been asked by *Sheikh sahib* to resign as Deputy Chief Minister, thus breaking a political association of 45 years. And now he and Begum Abdullah began to groom their eldest son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah for this post. From that time on *Shah* made up his mind to begin his plans for a takeover from Farooq later on. In this he was helped by Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

From 1978 onwards after the Kashmir Accord of 1975, with Sheikh Abdullah reinstalled as Chief Minister of his State and after the State Elections of 1977, Mrs. Gandhi, now herself out of power, had begun to approach G. M. Shah, sensing that he would be useful, for Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference were not proving as compliant as the Centre wished.

"*Mainstream*" of Delhi, in an article of August 4th, 1984 wrote concerning G. M. Shah:

"The ouster and detention of *Sheikh sahib* in the first week of August, 1953 saw the parting of company between him and the tallest among his lieutenants: Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad the man of drive and daring; Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, the symbol of unalloyed integrity; Durga Prasad Dhar, the personification of scintillating charm and intrepid brilliance and Syed Mir Qasim, with his tenacious courage and cool sagacity.

"The National Conference now had to merge into the Congress, but... Mirza Afzal Beg provocatively set up the Plebiscite Front in 1959. In this enterprise Pakistan not surprisingly lent its patronage and the man who was known throughout as the regular conduit with the sub rosa Pak agency was G. M. Shah. With tenacity he built up the Plebiscite Front.

"By the time the Accord with Sheikh Abdullah was reached in 1975 Mirza Afzal Beg under *Sheikh sahib's* directive changed

course and was directed to negotiate and finalise the arrangement. In the process the Plebiscite Front was disbanded and the National Conference revived (in 1977)."

After the sweeping victory of the National Conference in the State Elections of June, 1983, G. M. Shah apparently expected to be made at least Deputy Chief Minister, he who had never contested an election.

In September, 1983, when I was in Srinagar, Shah celebrated the marriages of his son and daughter in three-day long functions in *Kashmiri* style, with hundreds of guests, most of whom apart from relatives were the Congress (I) members with whom he intended to collaborate.

Now the Pradesh Congress (I) Chief, *Mufti Syed* began to hobnob with the frustrated G. M. Shah. The two launched a non-stop campaign against Farooq's Ministry through the latter half of 1983 and the spring of 1984 to the extent that the Governor, B. K. Nehru resigned in disapproval and was replaced by Jagmohan as Governor.

The National Conference of Sheikh Abdullah was now split into two, with Farooq's own sister, G. M. Shah's wife, calling herself President of National Conference (K). Farooq was now backed by the Opposition parties of India. On June 2nd, 1984 his Ministry was dismissed when G. M. Shah could muster 12 defectors, including two nominated women members and the backing of 26 MLAs of the Congress (I).

An 18 days' curfew was imposed in Srinagar city, which meant that for that period people could not go to their jobs, they could not buy their rations, sick people, both in Srinagar and from outside, could not get to the hospitals, no tourists could come to the Valley. All those belonging to the Puppet Ministry had to live and work under heavy guards. *Shah's* own house was surrounded by paramilitary forces to protect him while Dr. Farooq, his family and party members came and went at leisure in their own transport. All through the summer there was a succession of Section 144s and curfews imposed, protest strikes, etc.

On Independence Day, August 15th, 1984, Shah arranged a grand function in the Srinagar Stadium, which was boycotted by all except Ministers and Government officials who had to go and as the

Ministers came out of the stadium at the end of the function, heavily guarded, their cars were stoned by the public, waiting for this very purpose!

It was during this period that I received a special message from Khalida Shah, with whom I had a good relationship for the previous four summers when we had met, that she wanted to meet me and explain her position to me. However, my feeling was that in joining with her husband and Congress (I) to split into two parts the National Conference, for the formation of which her own father had been responsible and helping to create divisions and disaffection in the Party, she had betrayed all that Sheikh Abdullah had striven for. And so I was not prepared to hear her explanation of her position. I had already formed my own opinion of the whole tragic situation.

REFERENCE

- ¹ "Illustrated Weekly of India", 29-7-1984.

SOME POLITICAL FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF
JAMMU AND KASHMIR

MUHAMMAD SIDDIQ WANI

While I was in the Valley in August and September, 1983 I met several of the old Freedom Fighters, most of whom had started their political participation in the early years of Sheikh Abdullah's struggle. Some had their health shattered as a result of severe beatings, torture or terms in jail under bad conditions.

One such was Muhammad Siddiq Wani, son of Ali Muhammad Wani of Kramshor village, Badgam, whom I met in Badgam. When I met Mr. Wani at the house of his elder brother in Badgam, a National Conference supporter, he was walking on crutches and the left hand finger joints were twisted as a result of the severe beating which he had suffered in 1953 before arrest and imprisonment, from which time he had been crippled. Like most other Freedom Fighters I met whose health had been shattered by spells in jail or beatings he emphasised that he had received no substantial compensation for what he had suffered. But this is the pattern all over the world through the centuries. One fights and struggles for the cause itself if one is a visionary, one helps in its achievement and in the process suffers.

Mr. Wani told me:

"I joined politics in 1946 at the age of twenty-one years. I took an active part in the Quit Kashmir Movement of 1946 and was one of the many hundreds who were imprisoned. I was released after eight months and then worked underground along with others. I was an active member of the War Council in 1947 and at that time *Madar-i-Meharban* was Chairman of the Food Committee. At that time living conditions in the Valley were very bad. No supplies of necessities were coming from Pakistan as the Rawalpindi route had been closed and due to the general shortage of foodgrains, etc. in India because these had been sent

out by the British Government to the Indian Army personnel on the Middle East front during the Second World War, so we *Kashmiris* suffered terribly.

"In 1947, I was nominated President, National Conference for Kramshor and was also a member of the Peace Committee. In 1952, I joined Government service as a Village Level worker.

"In 1953 when Sheikh Abdullah was arrested I resigned from service and took an active part in demonstrations demanding his release. On 17th August I was arrested and imprisoned and kept in the Central Jail, Srinagar, for one year. While demonstrating in Hanzoor Choudhara before I was arrested, I was so badly beaten that I was hospitalised. This was after Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad had taken over as Prime Minister and was notorious for his ruthlessness to political opponents."

Mr. B. L. Kak has reported in his book that this fact is described by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz in "*Kashmir in the Crucible*" as follows:—

"Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad added some more laws to the armoury of repressions: Any citizen could be detained in prison for five years at a stretch and the Government was under no obligation to inform the detenu about the grounds of detention; the helpless victim could be re-arrested after release and detained for another term of five years. Bakshi, besides having a large number of goondas in his pay recruited a force euphemistically called the Peace Brigade, which was frequently employed to beat the opponents and silence them. He imposed heavy restrictions on the State press and peremptorily banned publication of newspapers which were critical of his misconceived policy and atrocious deeds. He seldom permitted a new journal to come out unless he was convinced that the editor would play his tune. During his days public meetings could never be held in the Valley for political purposes unless they were meant to support the views and the activities of the ruling clique."¹

Mr. Wani continued:

"After my release from jail I joined the Plebiscite Front and worked with it for about ten years. Its President was Mirza Afzal Beg (a member of Sheikh Abdullah's Cabinet) who had been arrested along with Sheikh Abdullah and hundreds of his

supporters including prominent leaders and legislators in 1953, after which in the agitations that followed there were several hundreds of police casualties."

Mr. B. L. Kak has written about the Plebiscite Front:

"Bakshi and the Government of India were taken aback when after his release on parole, Mirza Afzal Beg convened a meeting of Abdullah's supporters and formed the Plebiscite Front in 1955. The new political party demanded the holding of a free and fair plebiscite to finally solve the Accession dispute. Workers and sympathisers of the Plebiscite Front had also pledged to fight for the right of self-determination of the *Kashmiris*. The Plebiscite Front gained strength and attracted a good deal of public attention in spite of the stringent measures taken by the State Government against those charged with preaching secession."²

Mr. Wani concluded his interview by telling me that in 1966, aged 41, he again joined Government service and that nowadays he is working as a Village Level worker. He has three daughters and two sons. The elder two daughters are educated but without jobs. I met his two daughters and also a niece at the Badgam house, where Begum Abdullah and I had been invited for lunch. All of them were keen to obtain jobs as teachers, but as seemed to be the problem everywhere for women, only locally, because of the difficulty in finding suitable accommodation.

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² Kak, B.L., "*Kashmir: Problems and Politics*", Delhi, 1981, p. 60.

KHAWAJA GHULAM ASHAN WANI

On August 10th *Begumsahiba* and I went to Malamkam village by the side of the Wooller Lake, where she was to speak at the *Urs* of a *Pir*. Here large numbers of men, women and children had come from outside areas, mostly Jammu and arrangements had been made for their meals and camping out for two nights.

On the return journey we stopped at Nadibal village near Bandipur to pay a call on Khawaja Ghulam Ashan Wani, yet another old Freedom Fighter, whose family had also worked in the Elections of early June, 1983 on behalf of the National Conference. On arrival we found he had been confined to bed for the last twenty-two days with acute diarrhoea and was also a heart patient. He could hardly speak from general weakness. The newly qualified young local doctor in the village was treating him without charging fees, but he needed investigations and hospitalisation, so there and then *Begumsahiba* arranged for an ambulance to take him to Srinagar and for his admission to hospital. She and her husband never forgot the sacrifices made by old workers. Later in Srinagar we received the news that he had been successfully treated and was back home again.

I wrote down his story. He was a small shopkeeper with a wife and four children and had become a dedicated worker of the National Conference from 1940. He was a *razakar* in Nadibal and asked his elder brother to look after his shop as he had to come to Srinagar for directives about his political work. During this period he was arrested and jailed for 1½ years. In 1953 after the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, when he was participating in protest demonstrations he was caught and beaten up by the police. This was during the regime of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad. His flesh was badly torn so that his leg bone protruded and he had to be hospitalised. *Begumsahiba* used to visit him in hospital.

Bakshi's Government wanted *Wani* to admit that *Bakshi* was the leader of the people and not Sheikh Abdullah but he was not willing to betray his leader. As soon as he was able to leave hospital and walk a little with a stick he was taken to jail where he remained five years and was by then broken in health and home and business ruined.

By this time *Bakshi* had lined up with the Congress and he was considered to be a ruthless dictator, who was feared by the people

whereas Sheikh Abdullah was loved and revered by them. B. L. Kak writes:

"*Bakshi* was a clever politician. He knew New Delhi's intentions, his lust for political power made it easy for the Government of India to use him as an effective instrument in Kashmir. *Bakshi* and his Government received more than sufficient moral and material assistance from India."

That is how he became known by the epithet "Bakshi the Builder".¹

REFERENCE

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KHAWAJA MOHYUDDIN HAMDANI ZOHRA

On August 23rd, 1983, I met Khawaja Mohyuddin Hamdani Zohra, a much respected old Freedom Fighter, in his picturesque three storey house in the city, built on three sides of an inner courtyard. We sat on cushions in the large "*hamam*" room in an upper storey meant for winter living and *Hamdani sahib* gave me salted tea and *kulchas*. His health had been ruined by his incarcerations and brutal treatment in jail, including flogging, so he talked with some difficulty and as he was frail he reclined on cushions. He told me:

"In 1929-30 at the age of fifteen years I was a student of 8th class in Srinagar. I ran away to Lahore in sheer frustration, as I hoped to get a better education there. My elder brother was a school teacher in Srinagar and a great colleague of Sheikh Abdullah's after the latter's return from Aligarh. His name was Mirwaiz Hamdani and he was a member of the Reading Room group. Others there at that time were Khawaja Ghulam Mohiuddin Ashai, Maulana Abdur Rahim."

After July, 1931, when bloody riots had taken place and the news reached the Punjab, when British style floggings were carried out all over the State, when there was courting of arrests and processions of women were taken out, Prem Nath Bazaz wrote:

'As I write these lines admiration gushes forth from the bottom of my heart and my head bows in reverence to the unbounded spirit of sacrifice which a large number of men and women, illiterate, unsophisticated and defenceless, manifested humbly, patiently and meekly, by undergoing the brutal torture which was inflicted upon them.'¹

Hamdani sahib continued his narrative:

"While I was in Lahore in 1932 the Ahrars started their "*Kashmir Chalo*" movement, with Mazhar Ali Mazhar, Daood Ghazali, Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad of Sialkot, Chaudhry Fazl Haq, along with Sheikh Hissamuddin and Attaullah Shah Bukhari, both of Amritsar. It was a civil disobedience movement, Tehrik Ahrar. Sialkot was the headquarters and volunteers collected and went from there. There was a section of the Muslims, Ahrars included, who did not like the Kashmir agitation

for reforms being conducted from Punjab by the *Ahmedis*, who were well represented in the All India Kashmir Committee. Some elements thought the *Ahmedis* wanted to spread their influence in northern India. The Ahrars, therefore, did not approve of this Committee, to which the *Ahmedis* had contributed a considerable amount of funds, thus they decided to start their own invasion by sending in a mass of volunteers, starting in late October. This was to be anti-British as well as anti-*Maharaja*. Volunteers poured into Sialkot from all over the country, some from as far away as Calcutta, Bombay and Lucknow. Lawyers and other educated people joined. In one month 3,600 volunteers were arrested in Jammu city alone. Within seven days 10,000 volunteers entered the State from Srinagar side. Batches of 21 volunteers used to leave Sialkot for Jammu at brief intervals. People gave contributions. "*Sar-faroosh*" was written on the shirts of the volunteers, they wore white *pyjamas*, red shirts and the slogan was "Get Rid of the *Maharaja*". By now the *Maharaja* had to request the Viceroy to stop the volunteers.

"I had been a student leader from a young age and while in Lahore I had started to make speeches instead of joining school. As the movement had started in earnest the Ahrars ordered me to come back to Kashmir and work for Sheikh Abdullah. I collected forty volunteers who were *Kashmiris* and we went from Lahore. At that time Prime Minister Kaul had closed the Kohalla bridge to us, so we went over the mountains! We entered the State and reached Baramulla. This was in 1932. Then we reached Srinagar secretly and there at night at Shahi Masjid Sheikh Abdullah held a large meeting, in which there were 40,000 people. At that time there was no Mujahid Manzil in Srinagar. I raised a slogan, a "*nara*" and also the slogan of the Ahrars. Then Sheikh Abdullah asked who I was and sent for me. This was my first meeting with him, then I joined his movement."

After the publication of the Glancy Report in 1932, granting certain concessions to the Muslims Sheikh Abdullah made a tour of the Valley and then toured outside the State, where he went to meet leaders of the All India Kashmir Committee, the Ahrars and editors of the Muslim press in Lahore, to thank them for their help and invaluable support. *Hamdani sahib* continued:

"I was arrested with him in 1933 and was jailed for about two months. In 1932 the Muslim Conference had been started. Standing together at the water tap so as not to cause suspicion, ostensibly to wash, while they were incarcerated in Central Jail, Srinagar, Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi and Sheikh Abdullah together worked out the scheme for this organisation before they were released."

On 14th October of that year at Pathar Masjid, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was started. In his Presidential speech Sheikh Abdullah said:

'Hindus should have confidence in the Muslims. Power must go to the people. Kashmir has become an orphan.'

'We are extremely grateful to the Muslims of India in general and those of Punjab in particular for their unparalleled sacrifices and total sympathy in the cause of our trial and tribulations. We are also grateful to the Muslim press of the subcontinent for having so effectively represented our case.'

Sheikh Abdul Hamid, a loyal associate of Sheikh Abdullah, was Vice-President of the Conference.

In 1934 Sheikh Abdullah was in Sialkot—the Young Men's Muslim Association was started from there by him along with Maulana Masoodi. Then the movement spread to Srinagar. Sheikh Abdul Hamid, advocate, was also the acting President of Young Men's Muslim Association at that time. Those who made speeches or protests and who were flogged by the administration were awarded certificates by him. The flogging centre in Srinagar was the Exhibition Ground near to Amirakadal. Many respectable and grown up men were sentenced to floggings, in some cases for as many as thirty stripes.

Hamdani sahib showed me his certificate, written in red for blood, because of the floggings he had been administered in 1934.

"Then in June, 1939 the National Conference was formed and I remained in this with Sheikh Abdullah. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas wanted to be in the National Conference but the Jammu people did not support him in this, so he joined the Muslim Conference when it was restarted two years later. I was made a

member of the Working Committee of the National Conference.

"In 1953 when Sheikh Abdullah was arrested I was made General Secretary of the National Conference. The office of Deputy Prime Minister of his Government was offered to me by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad when he took office, but I refused. I was still an Assembly member so I formed the first opposition party in the history of Kashmir legislature—a democratic socialist front. Hakim Habibullah, Abdul Ghani, Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara, then of Jammu and Kashmir Political Conference, Mubarik Shah, ex-MP were with me. Our demand was for the release of Sheikh Abdullah. We were tolerated for some time, then again people were arrested.

'There was a Hazrat Bal murder case in which a number of us were falsely involved. Two hundred important people were arrested, including Maulana Masoodi, Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara and myself. The Hazrat Bal case was started in March, 1955 after the release on parole of Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg. There had been demonstrations against the Bakshi Government in Srinagar in February. A big clash occurred between Sheikh Abdullah's supporters and the National Conference (then headed by Mr. Bakshi Abdul Rashid, brother of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad). The police were of course with the National Conference—at that time the Government party of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad. Three persons were killed in the clashes so the Government registered a case against followers of Sheikh Abdullah. At that time Mr. Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara was President of the Jammu and Kashmir Political Conference and we were all jailed for three years and released in 1958.

"Then I was involved in what was called the Kashmir Conspiracy Case, along with Sheikh Abdullah and others. We were arrested on 29th April, 1958, under the Security Act."

Mr. B. L. Kak, Jammu journalist wrote about this case:

"On May 2nd a complaint was lodged in the court of law against Mirza Afzal Beg and twenty others, including four *Pakistani* Intelligence Officers who were charged with acts of conspiracy to overthrow the State Government and to facilitate wrongful annexation of Kashmir by Pakistan. The trial started in Kud from 11 June, assumed the name of Kashmir Conspiracy

Case. Sheikh Abdullah was on the list of the accused. On April 8th, 1964 Sheikh Abdullah and his associates were released and the case was withdrawn."²

Hamdani sahib said he was released a little earlier on medical grounds as by that time his health had been ruined. He concluded:

"I am by temperament a social worker and am still involved in social work. I have myself written several books on Kashmir."

Hamdani sahib had finished his reminiscences and was looking exhausted so I said good-bye and many thanks and as I came outside the "hamam" room into the upper verandah *Hamdani sahib's* wife, wearing a phelan, appeared in the verandah on the opposite side to ask if the tea had been to my liking, while his daughter-in-law, dressed in *shalwar* and *kameez* came to see me down to the exit door.

How nostalgic I felt when I remembered Sheikh Hissamuddin of the Ahrars, who had been a very dear friend of my husband's and mine, right from 1936 up to the time of his demise in Lahore a few years after 1947 and Attaullah Shah Bukhari, the great orator, also no more—both *Kashmiris* from Amritsar. He could address an audience of thousands for half the night, while people listened to him entranced, he used to call at our home in Delhi in 1945–47 and when I asked him to stay for supper would reply in his inimitable *Punjabi*, that if I would serve him with my own hands he would eat, but he would eat sitting on the floor and not at a table, for he was a *Kashmiri*!

So as we can see it was actually these Ahrar volunteers from the Punjab who by their agitation beginning in 1932 and inspired to some extent by Allama Iqbal, with their slogan of "Get Rid Of The *Maharaja*", were actually the first group to start the groundwork of the movement for "Quit Kashmir", which was then projected by Sheikh Abdullah and his supporters, for the removal of the *Maharaja* and the creation of the New Kashmir.

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ZUNOO BIBI MUJAHIDA

By the time I was ready to leave Srinagar I had interviewed and met political colleagues and opponents of Sheikh Abdullah, old friends and supporters, educationists, administrators and so on, besides three or four men Freedom Fighters, but I certainly didn't think I would find a woman Freedom Fighter especially one who was known and respected all over the Valley, until my last day in 1983, when I met Zunoo Bibi Mujahida.

It was October 8th and I was sitting in the vestibule of the house of Begum Abdullah, chatting to two married friends who had come to meet her. Suddenly the husband, Mian Ghulam Sarwar, himself a political dissident whom I had already interviewed, and his wife rose to their feet and looking out into the garden cried excitedly: "Look, look who's here. Quick, bring your camera and take her photo. She is Zunoo Bibi Mujahida, a unique person to us *Kashmiris*." I rushed to fetch my camera and we all moved out to the lawn where I took one photograph of a statuesque, virile old woman, dressed in a loose phelan and having no teeth and then my friend photographed the two of us together with her niece.

"Zunoo Bibi Mujahida is a legend in the Valley" said Mian Sarwar enthusiastically "and she can have entry into any house anywhere because of the respect and reverence which people have for her. She has sacrificed her whole life for our Freedom Movement from the *Dogra raj*, she herself having started from the time of Maharaja Hari Singh. You must listen to her story. You ask the questions and I'll translate, for she knows only *Kashmiri*." So we moved back into the house. Here is the story of Zunoo Bibi Mujahida, the only Freedom Fighter of a stature comparable to that of the men Freedom Fighters I had met earlier during my visit.

Zunoo Bibi was born in the Pathar Masjid area of Srinagar, near to Mujahid Manzil, the headquarters of the National Conference. She was married at the age of fifteen years and her son was born in 1927, so we calculated she was now about 73 years of age, but still sparkling with vitality. She said she started working for the people's Freedom Movement in 1939, a young woman of 27 years or so, after the National Conference had been formed because she was inspired by its programme, which was to work for the uplift of the poor and oppressed *Kashmiris* such as she. She participated in processions and demonstrations along with the men and she tried to persuade other

women to join, but then they would move out and she would be left to go to jail—the only woman. Some *Kashmiris* now living in Pakistan can remember Zunoo Bibi in their youth, when they along with her demonstrated at Habba Kadal in Srinagar!

Zunoo Bibi had been to jail nine times in all, each time for about one month, whenever Sheikh Abdullah was arrested by the *Maharaja's* government and she would then participate in the ensuing protests. She received punishments for her participation by way of taxes to be given to the *Maharaja's* government and her house was also confiscated. Her husband left her because she insisted on continuing to participate in the struggle and divorced her while she was in jail. Her nine years' old son was also shot and killed during a demonstration while she was once again in jail. Then her parents disowned her because they were so much harassed by the authorities. All this was before 1947 and then she was really alone, but she was undaunted and continued with her work.

Zunoo Bibi noticed that I was looking at her toothless gums and remarked:

"Yes, four of my teeth were broken at one time when I was beaten up by the police, during a demonstration". She struck her breast with clenched fists and emphasised:

"I gave my youth and my life for the cause of the freedom of our people."

During the Quit Kashmir Movement started in May, 1946 she worked for months underground with Khawaja Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara, who himself remained underground until after the release of Sheikh Abdullah at the end of September, 1947. She used to distribute so-called "seditious" leaflets and pasted posters on walls, all very dangerous if she had been caught. She had great praise for Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara, who was known as "*Bulbul-i-Kashmir*" at this time and became a legendary figure for the way in which he worked underground and kept the movement alive, often moving about wearing a *burqa*.

While Sheikh Abdullah was in jail during the regime of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, then Prime Minister, i.e. from 1953 onwards, Zunoo Bibi said that he, *Bakshi*, at the suggestion of the Central Government tried to persuade her to motivate women not to be

loyal to *Sheikh sahib*, but she refused. So somehow Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad also jailed her for fourteen days!

After being displaced by losing everything a woman needs—husband, child, parents and home, Zunoo Bibi literally had no fixed abode so she used to spend her nights in shrines, of which there are plenty in Srinagar and carried on with her work during the day. The family of Mr. Ahmed Shah, one of Sheikh Abdullah's supporters, used to look after her welfare, especially when she was working underground.

Now, retired, Zunoo Bibi receives a Freedom Fighter's pension of Rs. 300/- a month, the only woman *mujahida* to do so. Mr. Ahmed Shah has found her a room near to the Hazrat Bal shrine, in the vicinity of which Sheikh Abdullah is buried. The family provide her with food, for which she insists on paying from her pension, for she wants to keep her dignity. She had performed "*haj*" seven times from her own savings and keeps her shroud ready for the time when she will leave this world to, as she put it, "join *Sheikh sahib* in eternity!"

Her only prayer is that she may be buried near *Sheikh sahib* and not in any distant graveyard for he is the person for whose cause she sacrificed everything and as she said this she looked meaningfully at *Madara-i-Meharban* herself who, at this moment of our meeting came in. Zunoo Bibi rushed at her to enfold her in an overwhelming embrace, which nearly threw the poor lady over and then finished up with the reverent *Kashmiri* gesture of stroking both her cheeks and kissing the backs of her hands.

Zunoo Bibi *Mujahida* is of course only one of hundreds of women who became awakened, who also made their protests and who were amongst many hundreds who were shot while demonstrating during the early days of the Freedom struggle from the *Dogra raj*, but she is revered by all the Valley people as being the only one woman who has sacrificed everything in her personal life over a number of years for the cause in which she believed.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

LALLA MULK RAJ SARAF

PANDIT PREM NATH BAZAZ

I had already interviewed his son and written his recollections about my husband's old friend, Maulana Abdul Majid Salik, whose newspaper "*Inquilab*" was one of the foremost of Punjab press in supporting the struggle of the *Kashmiris* against the oppression of the *Dogra raj*, from 1927 onwards.

Now in the summer of 1983 in Srinagar I met Lalla Mulk Raj Saraf, known as the father of journalism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. A spry, vigorous and enthusiastic veteran of ninety years of age, who came twice to see me. He was still writing articles, innumerable letters to friends and fellow journalists and was collecting material and photographs for the 1983 Edition of his "*Jammu and Kashmir Year Book*". I marvelled at his energy.

In remembering the early struggles of the *Kashmiris* and their first awakening in the twenties to fight for their basic freedoms one should not forget that which is one of the most essential for a people—a free press. When today more than 250 dailies, weeklies and other periodicals are being published in Jammu and Kashmir it is difficult to visualise that it was only in 1924, after three years of intense struggle and three applications at the highest level that Lalla Mulk Raj Saraf, then thirty years of age and without financial resources, was finally able to obtain permission to bring out the first State weekly paper, "*Ranbir*" (named after Maharaja Ranbir Singh) in the reign of Maharaja Partab Singh.

Much earlier efforts had been made to start newspapers in the State, for example in 1867 a Mr. Bainkat Ram Shashtri brought out the first newspaper, "*Vidya Vilas*", a bilingual weekly in *Hindi* and *Urdu*.

In 1876 a Lahore Journalist, Munshi Harsukh Rai brought out an Urdu weekly, "*Tohfa-i-Kashmir*" from Srinagar.

In 1884 an Urdu weekly, "*Jammu Gazette*" was started in Srinagar by Munshi Nissar Ali Skohrat.

In 1908, after its having been started in 1903 and then closed down, the Rev. J. E. Peter of Leh, Laddakh, brought out "*Laddakh Pholyan*" in the *Bodhi* language and script from Leh.

All these were short-lived.

Mulk Raj Saraf, as he told me, was born in 1894 at Samba, near Jammu, received his higher education in Lahore and was there at the time of the Martial Law following the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre. He had met all the famous leaders of that time—Gandhi, Nehru, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, Dr. Ansari. He left his law studies in Lahore and worked there on the staff of Lala Lajpat Rai's Urdu daily, "*Bande Matram*" from 1920. By then he was already writing articles on Jammu and Kashmir for "*Kashmiri Magazine*", published by Maulana Muhammad Din Fauq, the friend of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, outstanding scholar and writer, himself from a *Kashmiri* family, who had been refused permission in 1906 to shift the publication of his magazine, already started, from Lahore to Srinagar. Remembering the conditions of the people in his own State, Saraf thought that if Lahore alone could provide scope for so many newspapers could not the State of Jammu and Kashmir afford even a single newspaper? So finally, a penniless graduate, he decided to return to his State and try to start a newspaper. There was now enough of social urge and awakening in the people for them to feel the need for a forum to project their views. The first issue of his paper, which finally came out on June 24, 1924 after a long struggle, was received with great enthusiasm by the public and congratulatory messages came from various parts of the world. "*Ranbir*" was banned by Maharaja Hari Singh in May, 1930 but was allowed to re-start in November, 1931. It closed down on May 18th, 1950. Mulk Raj Saraf also started a very popular children's monthly journal, "*Rattan*" in 1934.

A Press Law on the lines of that of British India was enforced in the State in 1932 after the recommendations of the Glancy Commission. After the enactment of the new Press Law the first newspaper to appear in Srinagar was "*Vivasta*", an Urdu daily by Prem Nath Bazaz, but because of its nationalist policy it did not

last long. Then came "*Rahbar*", still surviving today, "*Martand*", "*Sadaqat*" of the Muslim Conference with Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi on the editorial board, which ceased publication in the late thirties, then "*Khidmat*", mouthpiece of the National Conference. Other newspapers also made their appearance. They could be divided into two groups—the Hindu press and the Muslim press, which advanced the interests of their own co-religionists and were owned, edited and staffed by them. By 1947 there were papers representing National Conference, Muslim Conference, *Kashmiri Pandits*, the *Ahmedia* Community, *Sikhs* and pro-Congress and pro-Government.

But it was Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz who pioneered a new trail in respect of the press by starting an Urdu weekly, "*Hamdard*" in Srinagar in 1935 in collaboration with Sheikh Abdullah, which criticised Government policies and listed the grievances of the people. It even had a Muslim editor, Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi. It began as a weekly and attempted to blaze a new trail—advocated secular politics, preached unity of all *Kashmiris* and made a change in the thinking of the younger people. The paper lasted for twelve years, i.e. until 1947 when it had to close down because it was the main opposition paper of the *Maharaja's* regime and its editor was jailed!

Several times numbers of "*Hamdard*" were banned and securities demanded for articles critical of the despotic rule and vested interests of the State. In 1938 it had to close because of the heavy security deposit demanded and the incarceration of Prem Nath Bazaz, but it was restarted in April, 1939.

In 1941 Bazaz severed his links with Sheikh Abdullah because of political differences and became sole owner and manager of "*Hamdard*", which in March, 1934 was converted into a daily. Another independent paper, "*Kashmir Times*" started in 1944 but was banned and discontinued in 1947.

Mulk Raj Saraf's "*Ranbir*" was the pioneer and first cautious effort in journalism in the State and always remained pro-Government and pro-Congress. Thus one can say that Lala Mulk Raj Saraf was the pioneer of journalism in Jammu and Kashmir while Prem Nath Bazaz was the missionary of its press freedom, in the cause of which he suffered a number of times, both financially and through incarceration.

Now Prem Nath Bazaz, the younger of the two, lived in Delhi, as a frail invalid after two major heart operations until his demise in July, 1984, while Lala Mulk Raj Saraf, the elder, has his summer residence in Srinagar, house and press arrangements in Jammu and still finds time to visit his son, a well-known film producer, in Bombay in the winter!

LOYAL FRIENDS FROM STUDENT DAYS ONWARDS

SARDAR AJIT SINGH SARHADI

Sheikh Abdullah always considered Sardar Ajit Singh Sarhadi as one of his very dear friends and after learning that they had known one another since 1925 in Lahore I decided to stop off in Chandigarh on my return journey to Pakistan in October, 1983 in order to meet him again. At the time of my travel there were bomb explosions, train derailments and shoot-ups, as well as protest strikes in Srinagar, Delhi and Chandigarh, so I crossed my fingers that I would get in and out of Chandigarh with my mission completed!

Sardar Ajit Singh Sarhadi had been in the Sikh resurgent movement since the thirties of this century. He was a Minister from 1943—45 in the coalition cabinet in N.W.F.P. and had been elected to the Frontier Assembly as an Independent in 1947. He played a conspicuous role in Sikh politics during crucial times and is one of those who led the movement of the Sikhs for independent thinking and action on their future. He is one of those who feel that with proper handling the Muslim League could have been dissuaded from insistence on Partition. He was arrested in 1949 for the part he played in the *Punjabi Suba* struggle. He was elected to the Lok Sabha with Congress and *Akali* support in 1951, where he served until 1962. At present he is a senior advocate of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana.

Sardar Ajit had a bad fall a few months back in which he had broken a femur and then later on had a heart attack. He was kind enough to give me time when he was just back on his feet, walking with the help of a stick and attending court once more, when I met him at his home in Chandigarh on 14-10-83. He had told me in our earlier meeting a year before that he was the same age as Sheikh Abdullah, and now I learnt that his cousin, Lal Singh was Sheikh Abdullah's class-fellow and they lived in adjacent rooms of the hostel of Islamia College, Lahore, called Wilson Hostel, situated at that time on Beadon Road. It was here that *Sardar sahib* used to meet Sheikh

Abdullah. He himself was a student of Forman Christian College, Lahore, where he was reading for an M.A. in History.

Sardar Ajit Singh remembers Sheikh Abdullah in his student days as a quiet and serious young man who was very emotionally moved by the realisation that his impoverished and fellow *Kashmiris* were forced to come in their hundreds to Lahore and other cities of the Punjab in the winter to earn to pay the compulsory land revenue owing to the Dogra Government for the small pieces of land they farmed in their homeland. He said:

"After the gap of our student days I met *Sheikh sahib* again when he came to Kohat, where I was born, for Congress electioneering for the 1936 Elections. Then after 1947 I used to meet him in Delhi where we had a common friend, Miss Miradullah Sarabhai. It was she who financed Sheikh Abdullah's trial in the Kashmir Conspiracy Case in 1955, in which he was defended by Sardar Amar Singh Ambali."

I met Sardar Amar Singh Ambali, who is an advocate in the High Court at Chandigarh, in October, 1983. He told me that Miss Miradullah Sarabhai had specially requested him to defend Sheikh Abdullah as she wanted minority groups to be given more importance.

Sheikh Abdullah had been released from detention in Kud-Special Jail on 8-1-58 and the kind of speeches he made about the State's "temporary succession" to India made *Bakshi* and his supporters anxious until he was re-arrested on 29-4-58 under the Security Act. On 2nd May, a complaint was lodged in the court of law against Mirza Afzal Beg and twenty others, including four *Pakistani* Intelligence Officers, who were "charged with acts of conspiracy to overthrow the State government and to facilitate wrongful annexation of Kashmir by Pakistan. The trial started in Kud from 11th June, and assumed the name of Kashmir Conspiracy Case. Sheikh Abdullah was one of those charged.

There were four lawyers to defend all the accused. All kinds of help for them was received both in cash and in kind from the public. For example Miradullah Sarabhai provided transport for the lawyers conducting the cases, the Majestic Hotel, Srinagar, proprietor gave four rooms without charge for the four years which the trial lasted. Sheikh Abdullah was released on April 8th, 1964.

Sardar Amar Singh had been called to Kashmir in the summer of 1983 to help in electioneering, in effect to obtain the votes of the *Sikh* community for the National Conference Party. Rajinder Kaur, M.A., Ph.D. of Amritsar, the daughter of Master Tara Singh, had been called for the same purpose. I asked *Sardar sahib* what had been his line in overcoming any objections of the *Sikh* community in Kashmir to giving their votes to the National Conference. He said one of their objections was that *Punjabi* had not been recognised as a State language. So in reply he pointed out to the electorate that four-five other States in India where Congress (I) had been returned and where *Sikhs* had a considerable majority, including Haryana, where they were 35% population, had not recognised *Punjabi* there. This point they appreciated. He then reminded them that if they supported the National Conference which was striving for the firm status of Clause 370 of the Constitution which gave Jammu and Kashmir a special status, they would in effect be helping their own cause for recognition of more autonomy for the Sikhs of the Punjab.

In an interview with the "*Muslim*", Islamabad, Pakistan, on 15-4-84 Sardar Natha Singh Dalam, MLA, Chief Whip of Akali Dal, in Indian Punjab Assembly said at Gurdwara Puja Sahib, Hasanabdal on 14-4-84:

'The Akali Dal supported the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir in the 1983 State Elections. Ten MLAs of Akali Dal, including (he) himself visited Jammu and Kashmir and participated in the election campaign in favour of Dr. Farooq.'

Sardar Ajit Singh continued:

"I was practising law in Jullunder. I was always a member of the Akali Party and being a member of Lok Sabha from 1951-62 professionally I had to go to Delhi many times, where *Sheikh sahib* and I would meet and after 1964, when he had again been jailed I used to go to Srinagar and meet Afzal Beg at Mujahid Manzil.

"I was always trying to persuade Sheikh Abdullah to take up minority leadership and he did try to help the minorities—Hindus, Sikhs. That is how he wrote the Foreword to my book, "*Nationalities in India*" in 1974, when he was not even in office."

In his book Sardar Ajit Singh has said:

"On the basis of the lessons drawn from partition of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan in 1947 the author explodes the contentious thesis of '*One Nation One State*'. He observes that had the leadership of the post-partition days boldly faced the issue of diversities of 'nationalism', such as Sikhs, Nagas and Muslims, most of the tensions arising out of the demand for regional autonomy would have died a natural death."

Sardar sahib continued:

"All the time Sheikh Abdullah remained in office he tried to guide the Centre about the linguistic groups of India and the minorities. He wrote in his Foreword to my book that India should look after the minorities and linguistic groups, e.g. in Haryana 40% people are *Punjabis* and at least 20% are Sikhs. I have emphasised in my book that India should have confidence in supporting the border states like Kashmir, Punjab. That will give them a sense of security."

In 1975, Mr. G. Parthasarathy, who had assisted in the Indo-Pakistan talks in December, 1962 on the Kashmir problem, was sent for mediation by Mrs. Indira Gandhi to Sheikh Abdullah to persuade him to return to power. This happened after protracted talks, extending up to almost three years between Mr. G. Parthasarathy, as representative of the Union Prime Minister and Mirza Afzal Beg as representative of Sheikh Abdullah, when they both signed a six-point Accord on 13th November, 1974 at New Delhi. Fortunately Mr. Parthasarathy was successful for Sheikh Abdullah was the only man who could control and administer a state which was a very sensitive one, e.g. having boundaries with both India and Pakistan, Tibet to the East, separated from the Soviet Union only by a narrow strip of Afghan territory. He resumed power as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State on February 25th, 1975.

Mr. L. K. Jha, at that time Governor of Jammu and Kashmir has said in his Tribute:

"For me it was a moment of great pride and pleasure to swear him in as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir following the historic Accord between him and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi."¹

However, the opinion of Mr. B. L. Kak as expressed in his book is:

"On 25th February, 1975 when he was installed as Chief Minister in place of Mir Qasim he said:

'What has been achieved is a re-establishment of trust and confidence born out of shared ideals and common objectives of the kind which were there all through until 1953.'

"Abdullah and his associates proved, beyond any doubt, that their aim was to secure political power. They got the power. The pro-plebiscite groups in Kashmir wanted the Kashmir leader to refer the terms of agreement between him and Mrs. Gandhi to the people of Kashmir for their approval. And when the Kashmir Accord was published Abdullah repeatedly assured the people in his public utterances that he was bound to get it approved by the State people. His assurance was not implemented."²

Sheikh Abdullah had been nearly twenty-two years out of office. In his State there had been a change of three Chief Ministers, a war between India and Pakistan in 1965, separation of the two wings of Pakistan into two separate countries, corruption, maladministration, dissatisfaction with the different rules in his state, so if he felt he should make certain concessions with Indira Gandhi in order to return as Chief Minister and try to reorganise and correct maladjustments, it was perhaps understandable. Some of his people would agree, some would not, but he did his best according to existing circumstances.

When Sheikh Abdullah assumed power again he received a tumultuous reception everywhere barring one demonstration in a part of Jammu city. The Valley people in particular were hysterical in welcoming him back in power. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference was also revived in 1975 with Mirza Beg as its President. Later Sheikh Abdullah took over as President.

However, when I was in Srinagar in the summer of 1983 a group of young lawyers whom I met were very bitter about the terms accepted in the Kashmir Accord, in which the quantum of autonomy now conceded for the State by the Government of India under it was clearly far less than was offered earlier from time to

In his book Sardar Ajit Singh has said: B. L. Kak as expressed in his book
"On the basis of the lessons dr

"On the basis of the lessons drawn from the partition of the continent into India and Pakistan, when he was installed as Chief Minister of Madras, he said: 'The contentious thesis of *'One Nation, Two Religions'* is that had the leadership of the Congress been more sagacious, the issue of diversities of 'nationalities' could have been a re-establishment of trust and understanding between the Muslims, most of the tensions of the past could have been smoothed out through ideals and common objectives of regional autonomy would have been achieved by now.'"

Sardar sahib continued:

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Mr. L. K. Jha, at that time^{ent.}
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"For me it was a moment in the summer of 1983 when I was very bitter about the Government of India's offer of the historic Accord to the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in which the Government of India offered earlier from time to time to him in as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir the quantum of the historic Accord by the Government of India."

KHAWAJA GHULAM AHMED JEWELLER

Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller, with a shop on the Bund in
Prinagar, was a very loyal friend and political supporter of Sheikh
Abdullah until the National Conference was formed, when he joined
the Muslim Conference on its revival and then became Deputy
Leader of the State Assembly in the Elections of January, 1947,
which were boycotted by the National Conference, but he always
remained a very dear friend of *Sheikh sahib*. He was one of the
witnesses to *Sheikh sahib's* "*nikah*" ceremony in 1933, others being
Sheikh Muhammad Amin and Sheikh Muhammad Hanif.

Ghulam Ahmed's son, Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Jeweller, was also a great favourite of Sheikh Abdullah from the time the latter returned from Aligarh in 1930 and used to go and stay with him in the one room accommodation which he first had on his return!

When Sheikh Abdullah was in Kathua jail in 1938 he used to correspond with Ghulam Muhammad, then a law student in Lahore, asking him to:

- send him suitable press cuttings of news of Kashmir happenings
- keep in touch with his family who had gone to Lahore for the winter (by that time *Sheikh sahib* had three children) and send news of them
- let him know how *Bakshi* was and be of help of him if possible
- send him the printed version of Gandhi's letters

Ghulam Muhammad's sympathies were also with the Muslim Conference and he later migrated to Pakistan for a number of years, became a Minister in Azad Kashmir, but then on the death of his father, returned to Srinagar, where he has a flourishing handicrafts business. I attended the "*walima*" of his son, Tariq, in September, 1983 in Srinagar. Tariq also has a very modern handicrafts business in which he produces designs influenced by the several years he spent in the States.

In an article written some time ago on Quaid-i-Azam while he was in Pakistan, Ghulam Muhammad has given the following

description of an occasion in the Quaid's earlier visit to Kashmir in the summer of 1936, accompanied by Miss Fatima Jinnah, when it is said he also appeared in two cases in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court:

"On June 2nd, *Id Milad-un-Nabi* was being celebrated in the Valley and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah had arranged an open air public meeting. The meeting was held at Mujahid Manzil, then headquarters of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. It turned into a mammoth meeting attended by Quaid-i-Azam, Prince Azam Jan of Hyderabad, several other visiting dignitaries from India and the elite of Kashmir. Seldom has Srinagar witnessed such a gathering of celebrities as on that day. The meeting was presided over by Maharaja Hari Singh's personal friend and Minister-in-Waiting, Nawab Khusraw Jung of Hyderabad, Deccan. Amongst other speakers, Quaid-i-Azam addressed the gathering in English and spoke on the life of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). In his speech Quaid-i-Azam mentioned that he had been prompted to select Lincoln's Inn in London for his Bar-at-Law as among the great law makers the world has produced, the name of the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) figured prominently at this institution.

"Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah as Chairman of the reception committee made an introductory speech in Urdu explaining why chairs had not been provided that day for the dignitaries because the day was being celebrated in honour of that great Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who preached equality among men. Hearing this the *Mir Munshi* of the British Residency in Kashmir, Munshi Siraj-ud-din, a great literary figure of those days, recited in his roaring voice the following couplet of Iqbal, of which the English rendering would be:

'At the time of prayers all men stand side by side. There is no distinction between the ordinary man or He who is the Provider of men.'

"It was a moving sight to see an emotional current pass through the audience and there were prolonged shouts of "*Allah-o-Akbar*".

ALI MUHAMMAD ("SUNSHINE ALLEY")

Besides his political associates Sheikh Abdullah had an enormous number of friends from all classes and in many places. He loved them all and could be at ease with any or all of them, when he wanted to relax.

One such whom I met in Srinagar in August, 1983, was Ali Muhammad, a small man suffering from asthma, who indignantly claimed he was 65 years, was said by others to be 90 and looked to be in his 70's. He now has a carpet shop at Dal Lake, called Sunshine Alley and in fact is known as "Sunshine Alley".

We talked in his shop over a cup of tea, after I had made two attempts to pin him down for a chat. He told me he first met *Sheikh sahib* in 1933 when his carpet shop was in the city near Mujahid Manzil, which became the headquarters of the National Conference in 1938, and is situated in the premises of Pather Masjid. He said:

"Every evening at 4 p.m. I used to go to First Bridge, where the trucks coming from Rawalpindi used to stop. One day a carpet dealer there, Muhammad Sikander, offered to introduce me to *Sheikh sahib* and from then on we used to meet frequently. After one month winter set in, in Kashmir and *Sheikh sahib* went down to Lahore as usual and I went to Delhi, where I used to run my shop for six months for the winter season—1st October to 1st April. From Lahore *Sheikh sahib* sent me a telegram that he was coming to stay with me in Delhi. I was one of the few *Kashmiri* businessmen there then. I had a carpet shop in Kashmiri Gate, over which I had a flat. After that every year in the winter right up to 1947 when *Sheikh sahib* used to come to Delhi for 1-2 months he stayed with me. All the political associates of his of that time and his friends also used to come to meet him there—Maulana Azad, Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, Pir Maqbool Jilani, Kashyap Bandhu, Prem Nath Bazaz, Muhammad Syed Masoodi, Pandit Nehru, Dr. Asif Ali and his wife, Hafiz Jullundhri and his wife, Col. B. H. Zaidi. All these people used to be entertained by me and some used to stay with me, e.g. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Hafiz Jullundhri and his wife.

"Each winter *Sheikh sahib* would stay with me, except of course when he was in jail. When he was externed from Kashmir

and was living in Delhi in Kotla Lane up to 1972 I used to send him *Kashmiri* dishes and also used to go there to meet him in the evenings. I was then again in business there after my shops in Delhi, Simla, Massoorie had been looted and burnt in the 1947 Riots. In 1948 *Sheikh sahib* got my son back from Lahore, where he was caught up. I went to Rawalpindi at that time, where I sat stunned for some months and then went to Lahore, but even though I was offered property in Rawalpindi in compensation for what I had lost in India I decided to return to Kashmir, for the sake of my son.

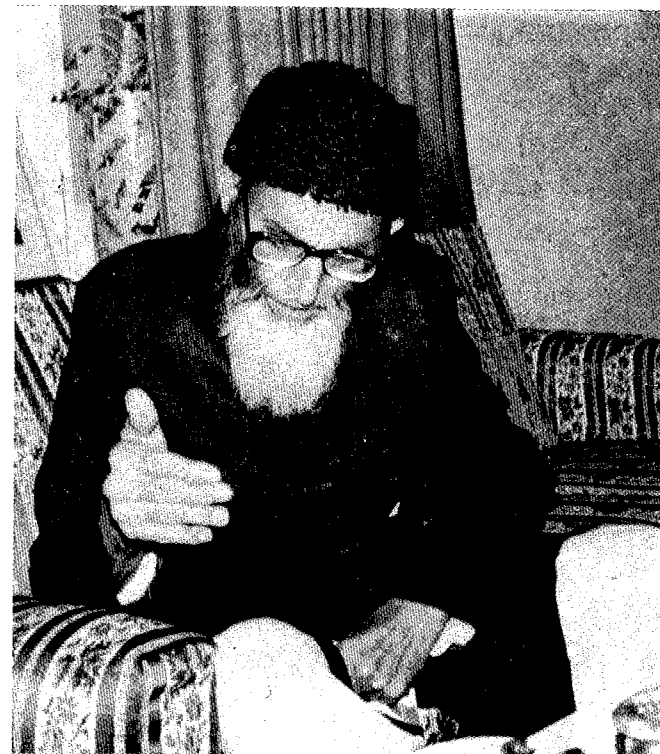
"When he was externed from Kashmir and lived in Kotla Lane, Delhi, *Sheikh sahib* used to keep a beautiful garden. Besides flowers, which he loved, he also used to grow various kinds of *Kashmiri* "saag"—wastahak, liss, and when his wife and children were staying with him in Delhi they all used to help in the garden. He used to send the *Kashmiri* "saags" to all his *Kashmiri* friends. In Delhi he used to be invited to Ambassadorial parties and when he went for prayers to Jama Masjid he used to buy *kababs* from a nearby shop. He was always fond of good food, especially *Kashmiri* dishes.

"When *Sheikh sahib* became Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, in 1975 he used to visit me at my shop in Srinagar at Third Bridge and when I became ill he also used to come to see me.

"When he was on his death bed I went to his house to see him but the police would not let me in and I left. A servant reported to *Sheikh sahib* that I had been turned away. Lying on his bed he cried out:

"Go and fetch him at once. I must see him once more" and a car came to my Dal Gate Shop to fetch me so that I could have one last glimpse of him."

POLITICAL ASSOCIATES



Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masudi, an Old Political Associate of Sheikh Abdullah



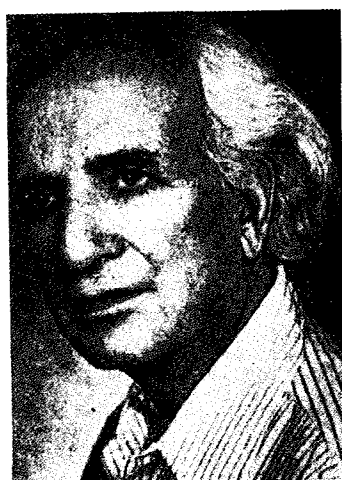
*Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad,
Prime Minister, Jammu
and Kashmir*



*Khawaja Ghulam
Muhammad Sadiq,
Prime Minister, Jammu
and Kashmir*



Ghulam Mohiuddin Kara with the Author, 1983



*Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz,
Prominent Freedom Fighter,
Historian and Journalist*



*Allah Rakhar Saghar,
a Jammu Political
Associate of Sheikh
Abdullah*



*Chaudhry Muhammad Ghulam
Abbas Khan, a Political
Associate of Sheikh Abdullah*



*Abdul Majeed Qarshi, a Jammu
Political Associate of Sheikh
Abdullah*

FREEDOM FIGHTERS



*Khawaja Mohyuddin Hamdani Zohra, a
Freedom Fighter*



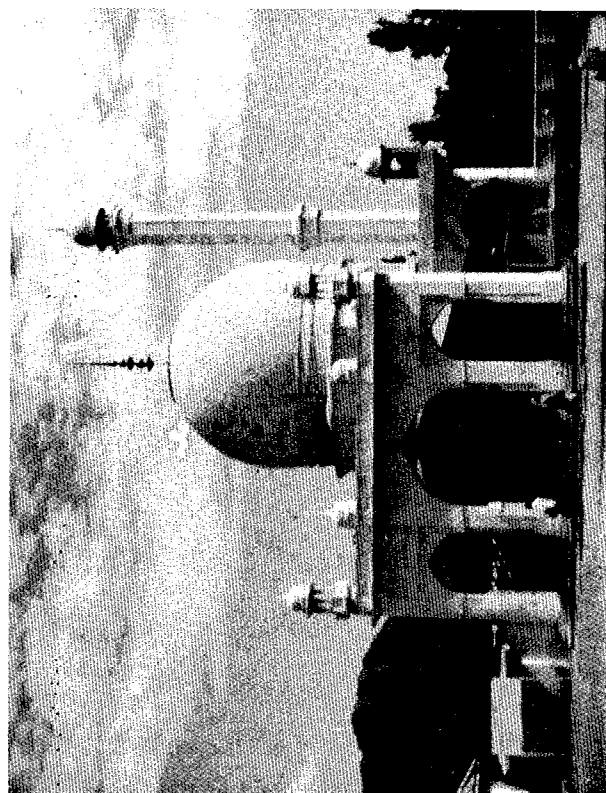
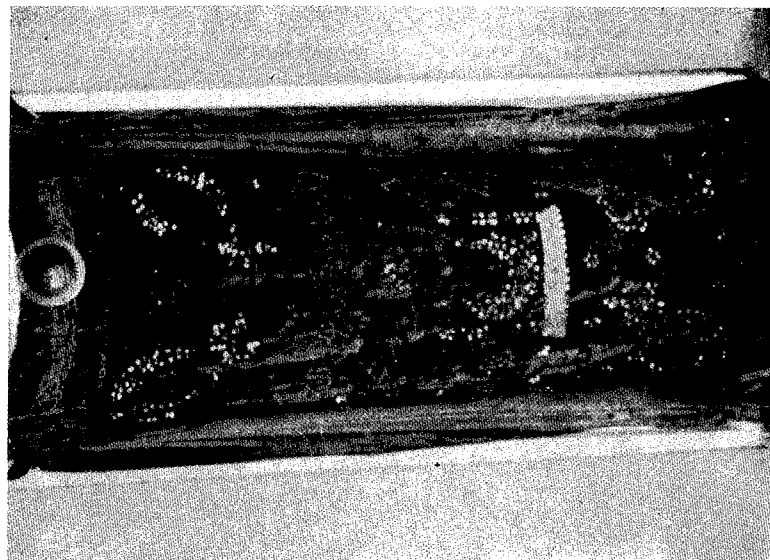
Muhammad Siddiq Wani of Badnam, a Freedom Fighter



*Zuno Bibi Mujahida, Freedom
Fighter, with the Author in
Srinagar, October, 1983*



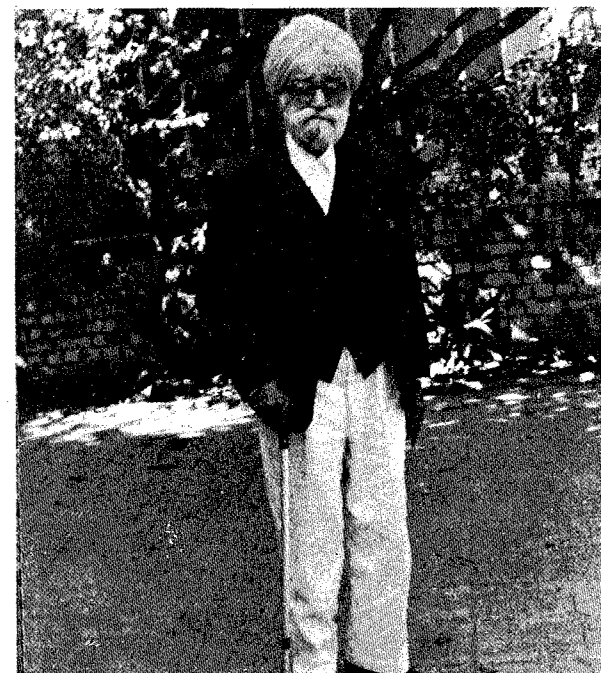
*Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, Father of
The Modern Political Movement*



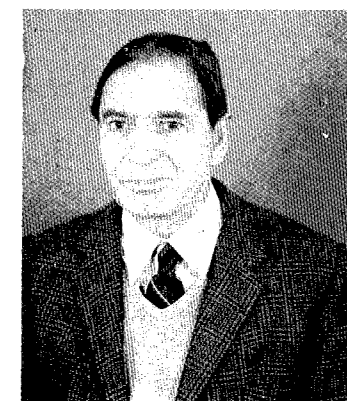
Hazrat Bal (Holy Shrine of the Holy Hair), Srinagar

*Door covering the Deedar Scroll of Hazrat Bal Shrine
near Srinagar* ←

FRIENDS



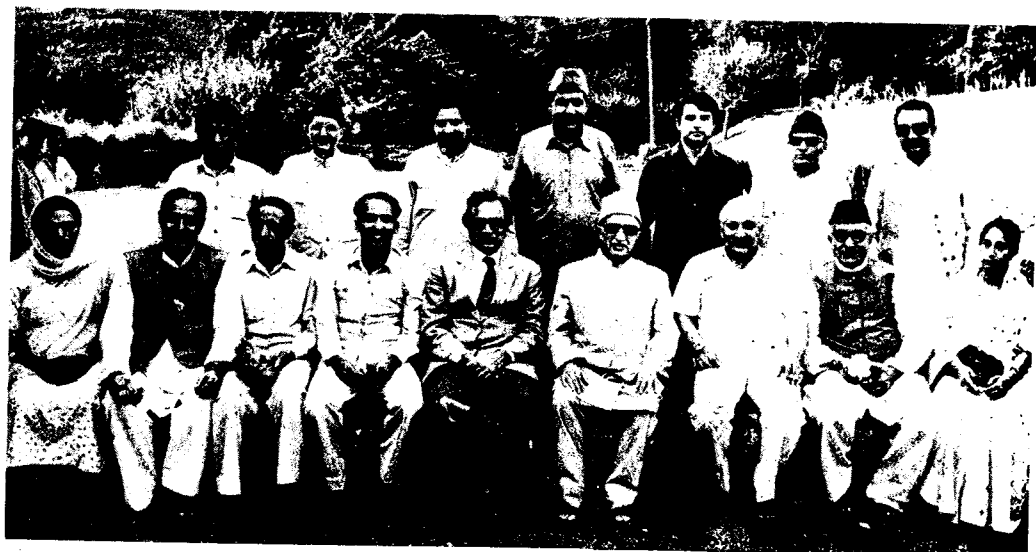
*Sardar Ajit Singh Surhadi, an Old Friend
of Sheikh Abdullah*



*Ghulam Ahmed Jeweller and his son Ghulam Muhammad
Jeweller, Devotees of Sheikh Abdullah*

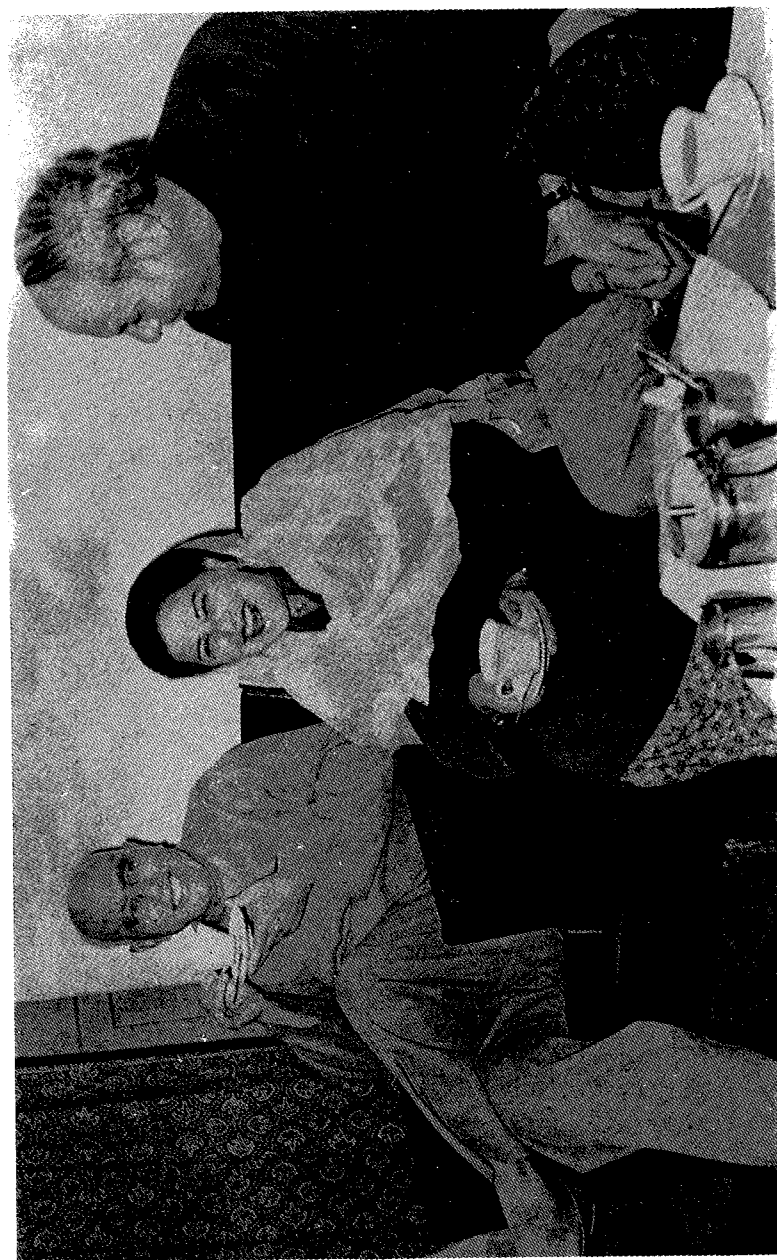


*Mr. Ghulam Mohyuddin
(Suffering Moses)*



*Chief Minister Khawaja G. M. Shah and his
Puppet Cabinet Ministers, 1984*

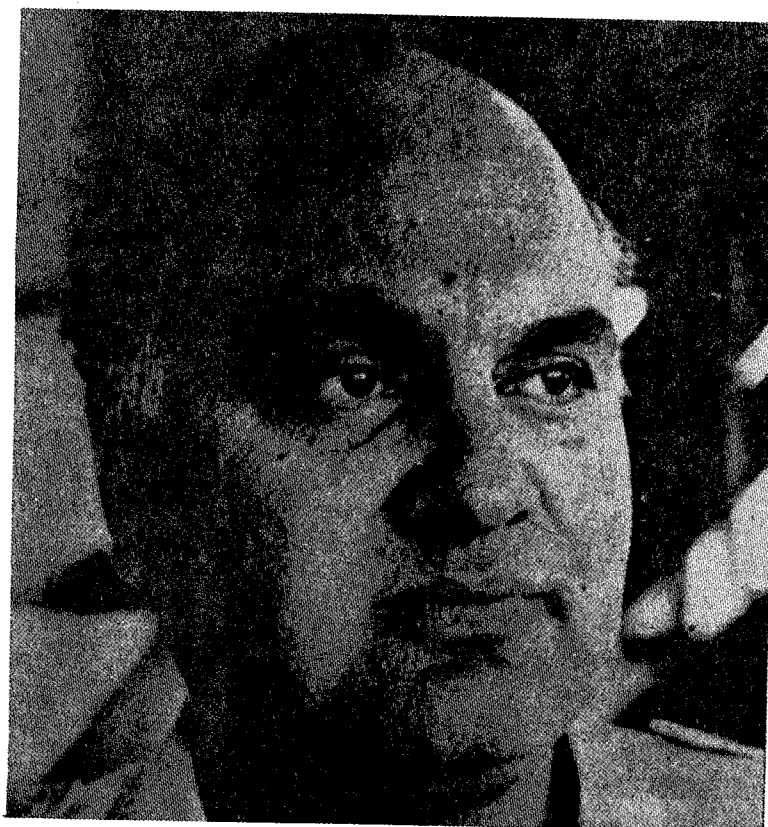
FAMILY MEMBERS



*Sheikh Abdullah, Begum Abdullah and their son
Dr. Farooq Abdullah in a Happy Mood, 1981*



Taking Tea and Kulchas with Sheikh Sahib



Tariq Abdullah, Younger Brother of Dr. Farooq Abdullah



*Begum Khalida Shah, wife of
Ghulam Muhammad Shah*



*Begum Abdullah with the Bride, daughter of
Khawaja G. M. Shah, September, 1984*

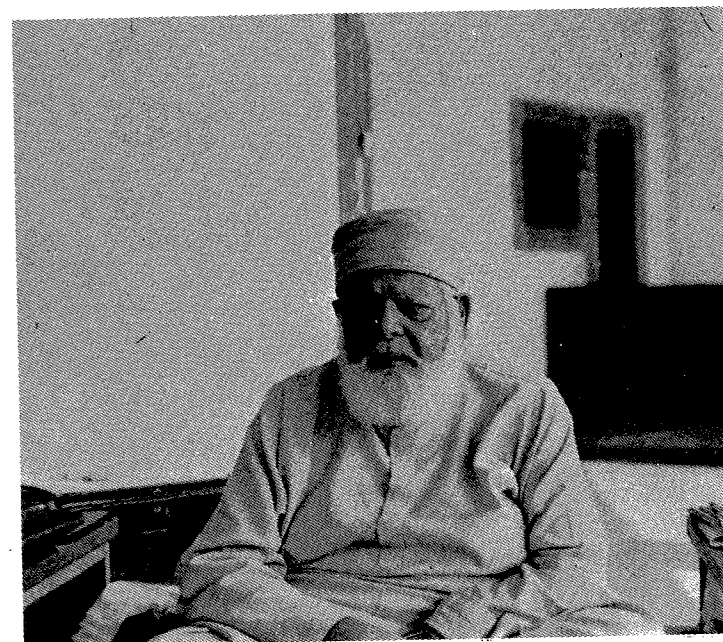


Eid-ul-Fitr Dinner with Begumsahiba and Family

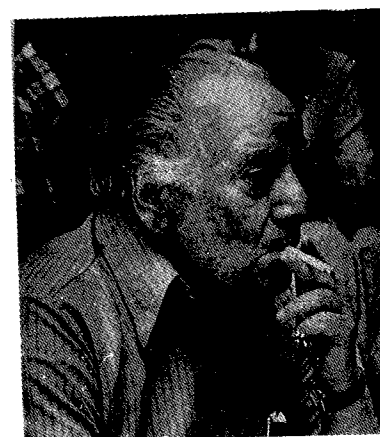


Dr. Farooq Abdullah's Family

PUNJAB SPEAKS



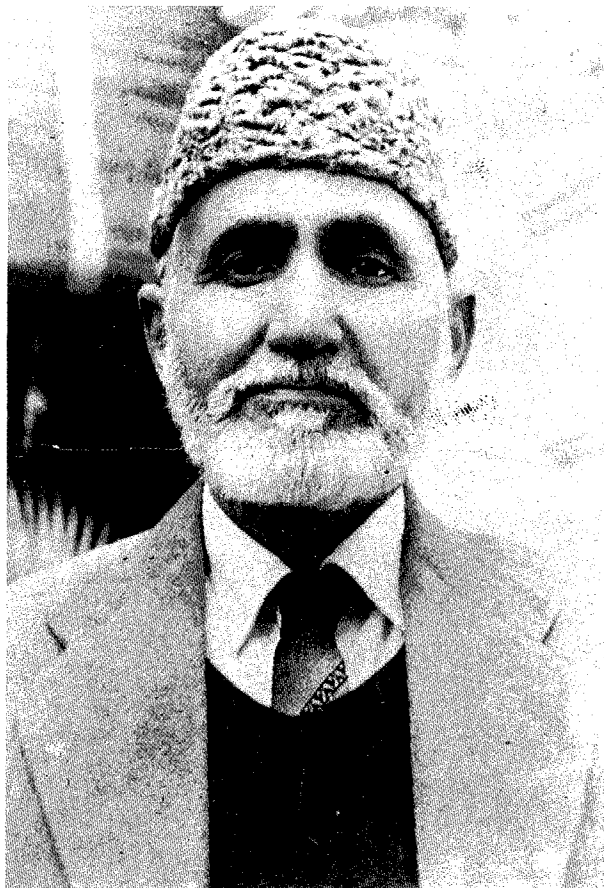
Nawab Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani



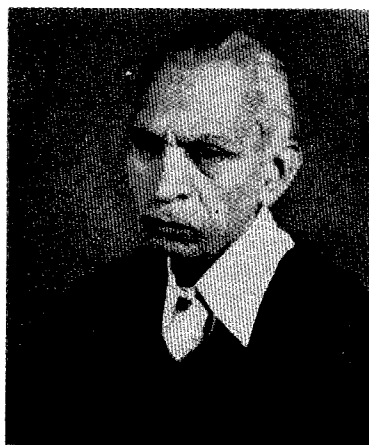
Faiz Ahmed Faiz



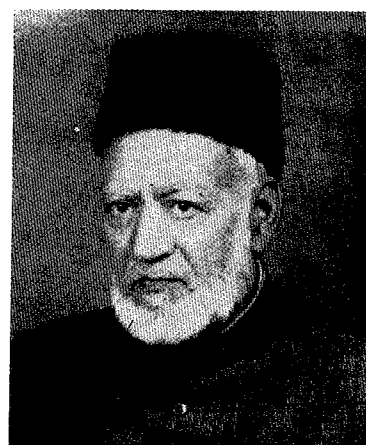
Justice Anwar-ul-Haq



*Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Advocate,
Jammu, Pioneer of Freedom*



*Maulana Muhammad Abdullah
Qureshi*



Prof. Ilmuddin Salik



Mr. Kalim Akhtar



Mian Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana

MR. GHULAM MOHYUDDIN (SUFFERING MOSES)

After having attended a number of memorial functions held in connection with the first death anniversary of Sheikh Abdullah in September, 1983 and having read memorial numbers of magazines and books, mostly dealing in a very solemn strain with the post-1947 period of his life it was a welcome change to listen to an old friend and supporter of *Sheikh sahib's*, Mr. Ghulam Mohyuddin (of Suffering Moses shop) talk in a lighter vein about the early days of the struggle against the British and Dogra rulers.

Mr. Ghulam Mohyuddin was very entertaining in his reminiscences about Sheikh Abdullah in the first years of his agitation for justice for the *Kashmiris* and improvement in administration, after returning from Aligarh University, when he had begun to be known as the Lion of Kashmir. I used to go and sit in his handicrafts shop on the Bund during the months of August and September, 1983, where he reminisced, while his American born wife attended to the foreign tourists who used to come each day. He said:

"It is now almost a fifty-five years back period that I am remembering."

Some days he would chuckle and talk, other days he would say:

"No, I am not in the mood. Let's just have a cup of coffee." He said:

"In the period 1924-37, along with Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl, Agha Sayed Hussan Shah Jalali was one of those who made a great contribution to our cause. He was aged seventy years when he was jailed and he was known as the *Nawab* of Kashmir. On going to jail he asked the *Maharaja* for three things to take with him—clothes for saying his prayers, as distinct from the prison uniform, his prayer mat and a copy of the Holy *Koran*. This request was granted.

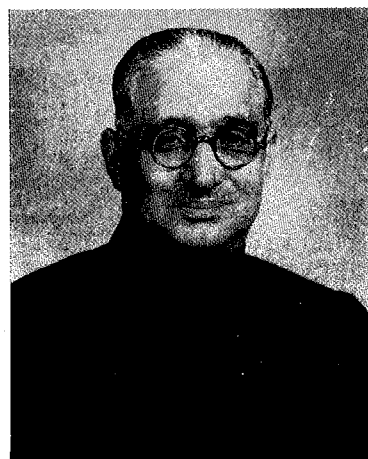
"I remember being told that at the time that Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl had been exiled from the State in 1923 and was helping our cause from outside he used to send his men to Domail Bridge. Half of it was in British territory and half in State territory. Sitting on the bridge in British territory his men used to shout anti-*Maharaja* and anti-army slogans and the *Maharaja's* army could do nothing to them!



Maulana Zafar Ali Khan
Editor of "Zamindar"



Maulana Muhammad Din Fouq,
editor of "Kashmiri
Magazine"



Abdul Majid Salik,
Editor of "Inquilab"

"We business men, located at that time on Third Bridge were all working with Sheikh Abdullah and giving him our support. There was a Brigadier Sutherland, an Englishman, Chief of Staff, who was determined to catch *Sheikh sahib* and we were determined that he should not. The houses at Third Bridge were searched but we used to hide *Sheikh sahib* in a different house each night. Brigadier Sutherland became more and more enraged and declared that he knew we were shielding our leader but he would catch him. Now for one week the army surrounded the whole area. Then they began turning out all the members of each house in their search, turn by turn, including the women-folk in their *burqas*. So one night we got hold of a tailor, gave him what we thought was enough cloth and told him to make a *burqa* immediately which was for *Sheikh sahib* to put on the next morning. The tailor said: "I have never made such a long *burqa*."

How could he have, for *Sheikh sahib* was six feet, four inches in height! We gave the *burqa* to *Sheikh sahib* and told him to put it on in the morning if the family of the particular house where he was secreted were made to come out. In those days he was as thin as a stick but still he could not hide his height. He wore the *burqa*, stooped a little, but when he emerged from the house Brigadier Sutherland took one look at him and said:

'Those are not the feet of a woman. Remove the *burqa*'.

"Thus was Sheikh Abdullah caught. This was the second or third time of his arrest. We gave a good beating to the tailor because we thought he had not used all the cloth we had given him!

"Beyond the Third Bridge there was some marshy land. We used to send people there late at night in the pitch dark to shout anti-Maharaja slogans. The soldiers would run to that area to catch the culprits and got caught in the marsh and water! We used to get our buttocks beaten by the soldiers when they caught hold of us!

"At the time when *Sheikh sahib* first began his work all newspapers and magazines from the Punjab dealing with the Kashmir movement were banned. Our group took an oath on the Holy *Koran* from Munshi Muhammad Ishaq, *Haji*, a truck owner,

whose trucks used to ply to and from Rawalpindi. As all transport coming into the State was scrupulously searched at the border for subversive literature we arranged with Munshi Muhammad Ishaq that he should get the spare tyres of all his trucks stuffed with such literature at Rawalpindi on the return journey to Srinagar. So all the literature we wanted came into the State, for no-one thought of searching inside spare tyres and the authorities were at their wits' end to know how everything was coming! Then we used to get it distributed to people from the mosques after Juma prayers.

"Once Sheikh Abdullah came on to the scene we all began to groom him for his mission. We supplied him with facts and figures about misrule and injustice to the Muslims by the Dogra Government. We used to stand him against the wall and make him start a speech, stopping him for corrections where necessary. Because he possessed the gift of a powerful sweet voice he was asked to begin his speeches with a recitation of a passage from the Holy *Koran*. This had such an entrancing effect on his audiences that they would sway from side to side in time with the rhythm, tears would come into their eyes and even Hindus used to come to his meetings especially to listen to his recitation and to ask us its meaning. He fired the imagination of his audiences, he was the inner voice of their hearts, he became their hero, their Sher-i-Kashmir.

"Sheikh Abdullah was a deeply religious man although at the same time he was secular by conviction. Two things were unknown to him—fatigue and fear.

"In the beginning of our agitation we had not learnt to work in large groups. My shop was at that time at Third Bridge and from there our small band of business men used to organise our agitations. The State at that time was seething with dissatisfaction and discontent. There was a despotic and feudal rule. We began to collect facts and figures about discrimination against Muslims, in order to arouse people about the injustices being done to them. We told the people that in a State of 85% Muslims not 1% of them were employed in Government service—even *chaprasis* were Hindus. In our movement we were divided between the sweet and bitter things—there was the bitterness of the opposition of the administration towards our movement but there was the sweetness of knowing how many people were

with us, even though in spirit. For example we used to collect women and young boys at Third Bridge to shout slogans against the administration. Then Mr. Rajab, who was the Muslim Judge who had to give the orders for beatings advised us to tell the women and boys not to move about in a crowd to shout their slogans but to sit in lines on the ground with their backs to the bridge. He came to us quietly and said:

'You are Muslims, I am a Muslim. If I do not perform my duties I will be dismissed, but I am also a Muslim, like you people. So follow my suggestion. Get your people to sit down by the bridge with their backs to the wall and shout their slogans and I will not be able to do anything to them because they will not be in a procession.'

"Others who were with us in spirit in spite of being Government employees were Hakim Ali, known as "Silkworm Ali" because of his profession and Khawaja Salam Shah, an administrator during the period of Hari Singh's administration.

"All through the years when we were in close contact *Sheikh sahib* used to come to my shop, now on the Bund and sit to chat, just where you are sitting. Always he would get up once or twice to say his prayers, in fact I used to keep a special corner for him with a prayer mat. He was always fond of a good joke and had a great sense of humour. One morning he walked up to the house of my son, inside a lane of Hawa Kadal area. My son had gone to his shop, the children were in school and only the wife was in the kitchen. So *Sheikh sahib* walked up to the kitchen window, handed over a pair of ducks presented to him by a *shikari* friend to my astonished daughter-in-law and said to her:

'Please cook these birds nicely for your father-in-law and if he asks where did they come from tell him that they flew in from the window!'

"*Sheikh sahib* was always fond of the good things of life, especially good food and even more so after he fell ill in jail in 1969 in Kodai Kanal, Madras and was hospitalised in Delhi for treatment for diabetes. His doctor, Ali Jan, did his best to control his diet but often despaired. Once I invited *Sheikh sahib* along with about one hundred people to a real *Kashmiri* dinner

and my wife, who is a very good cook, spent a lot of time preparing a special meat stew for him, without fat and spices. But after looking at the dish he ignored it and ate heartily of the "*wazwan*" dishes. He loved being with his friends, people of all classes. With them he was open and warm, enjoying life, seeing that everyone around him was enjoying it."

MR. L. K. JHA, EX-GOVERNOR, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Ex-Governor L. K. Jha of Jammu and Kashmir, is an Economist of international fame and now Chairman of the Economic Administration Reforms Commission of Government of India. He was Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of the University of Kashmir up to 1980.

I met him and his wife in Begum Abdullah's house at dinner in the second week of October, 1983. When we met he very much surprised me by quoting my "maiden" name (name before marriage) and reminding me that we used to meet in Cambridge in 1935 summer, where both he and my husband were students of Cambridge University at that time. We reminisced about the Indian students of that time and the Indians who were prominently anti-Imperialist.

Two days earlier Mr. Jha had said of Sheikh Abdullah in a memorial lecture in commemoration of his first death anniversary, in the Government College for Women, Srinagar, at which I was present:

"His life was one of sacrifice. He spent years in jail before Independence and tragically even after Independence. And even when he was in power occupying the highest position of authority in the State he was not giving himself any respite. In sickness or health he toiled for the people whom he loved and who in turn gave him their love. For him the joy of life was not in a life of joy. His contribution to the political life of the nation as a Freedom Fighter and as a pillar of secularism is known to all. He belonged to a generation of giants and stood out as a tall towering personality among them."

THE FAMILY

BEGUM ABDULLAH (MADAR-E-MEHERBAN)

I had known Begum Abdullah (or *Madar-e-Meherban* as she is known to her *Kashmiri* people) along with her family since 1980, but until I went to Srinagar in October, 1982 for his *chehlum* and stayed there for two weeks I had mostly met her with her husband. Now in 1983 summer I spent nine weeks with her as her guest, participating in so many of her activities—District Board meetings, social service organisation meetings, college functions, meetings of political workers, visiting old Freedom Fighters—no one in this time could have known her better as a person, so it is a pleasure to write about her.

Begum Akbar Jehan, wife of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah—I think of her as a combination of extraordinary courage, tenacity, sense of sacrifice, political sagacity, tact in dealing with all of those with whom she had had to come into contact, irrespective of status, with affection and consideration for all.

She was married in 1933 to Sheikh Abdullah at Gulmarg in the Kashmir Valley. She had a very unusual background which moulded her as a person of the exceptional talents and capabilities which she was going to need in her future life as the marriage partner of a leader who was to make his mark by changing the destiny of the people of his nation, one of the two people, the other being Mahatma Gandhi who, as Faiz Ahmed Faiz wrote, created mass movements out of nothing.

Her mother came from *Gujjar* stock and her father, who converted to Islam and adopted the name of Sheikh Ahmed Hussain, was a Hungarian business man, based in the Kashmir Valley and Lahore. He was a great admirer of Sheikh Abdullah as a leader. It was said that *Sheikh sahib's* marriage to Akbar Jehan was arranged for him by two of his dearest friends and supporters, Sheikh Abdul Hamid of Jammu and Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl of Srinagar. Sheikh Ahmed Hussain kept an English governess for his young wife, a Mrs. Thompson, so that she could both learn English and how to manage his household efficiently. With her husband she travelled frequently to Europe, while in India the winters were spent in Lahore and the summers in Kashmir when not travelling in the subcontinent. Begum Abdullah, the eldest child and her three brothers had their schooling

in hill boarding schools, as their father's business activities were not confined to one place. They also travelled to Europe frequently with their parents.

Having a *Gujri*-speaking mother Begum Abdullah was from the beginning proficient in that language and, living in the Valley for part of the year, in *Kashmiri* also. Education and travel gave her proficiency in English, while Urdu was also a language spoken by the Valley people and visitors. Her religious education she received from childhood from her mother, while her father was also a convert to Islam, known later on as '*Pir sahib*'. After his death in 1940 he was buried in Miani Sahib Graveyard, Lahore. So, being groomed as an educated and disciplined person she was a very suitable marriage partner for Sheikh Abdullah who was already dedicated to a life of struggle for the uplift of his fellow *Kashmiris*, while her courage in facing difficulties and dealing with overwhelming problems were due to her education, which in those days was unusual for a *Kashmiri* Muslim woman.

As *Begumsahiba* told me:

"My mother, being herself a *Kashmiri*, was already dedicated to *Sheikh sahib's* cause and my father was also an admirer of his. At the time of my marriage she told me:

'Never ask your husband for any luxuries. Be prepared to live a simple life with him now, for his will be one of sacrifice.'

"She prepared me for any eventualities. All my married life was spent in moving from one place to another, my husband in and out of jail or externed. In the winters he used to go to the plains for his politics while the children and I stayed with my parents in Lahore up to 1947. The summers we usually spent in the Valley or on visits to other parts of India. When my husband was incarcerated for a long period I used to apply for permission to stay with him with the children in their school holidays, in his jail accommodation. There sometimes I used to cook, sometimes *Sheikh sahib* used to cook his favourite dishes and the only recreation for all of us in a small courtyard was badminton. If there was space, for example when we were externed to Delhi, we kept a garden and grew flowers and vegetables. While in jail *Sheikh sahib* would be planning what would be the direction of his activities when he returned again to normal life.

"Having had such a struggle to obtain his own education, achieved all on scholarships, my husband was extremely particular about the education of his children and if ever he found them slackening he gave them a great shouting. Khalida was born in 1935, Farooq in 1937, Tariq in 1939, Mustafa in 1941 and Suraiya in 1943. On the death of his own father, our nephew Sheikh Nazir came in 1950 at the age of 10 to live with us as a son. His father and uncle, Sheikh Ghulam Mohyuddin and Sheikh Muhammad Maqbool had brought up my husband, whose own father, Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim died a short time before he was born.

"While Khalida was still a small baby I began to organise women's meetings and then I started going into the villages to speak to women's groups to appeal to them to send their children to school and the mothers to observe hygiene and cleanliness. I went to one of my husband's meetings at Makhdum when Khalida was only 4 months' old. When he recited from the Holy *Koran* the audience went crazy and ran to him to pluck out hairs from his head to keep as mementos.

"Our worst time as a family was during the period, 1953-64 of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad's regime, while *Sheikh sahib* was imprisoned. He took revenge on anyone who tried to befriend us. We were thrown out of the Prime Minister's House after my husband's arrest on August 19th, 1953, without any notice. We found someone who was not afraid to rent us a house at Panchwara—an elderly Pandit couple, without any family responsibilities. One College Demonstrator, Mr. Raina, was courageous enough to continue to tutor the children, as he had been doing since 1950, in spite of official harassment a wonderful friend, Dr. Ali Jan, used to come to the house after dusk to see any member of the family who fell ill. *Bakshi's* Government gave us an allowance of Rs. 1,000/- per month, which was insufficient for all our expenses. People were afraid to call on us, so we were very lonely. Some kind friends like Miradullah Sarabhai used to help us financially and also my own brothers. Miradullah Sarabhai even took the three boys to Delhi and kept them with her for some time, and sometimes they used to stay with her in their winter vacations, when she thoroughly spoiled them. People shunned us on the streets, the younger children were ostracised in school. Once when I visited my husband in jail and was feeling very upset over his reduced health he said:

'It's all right, they cannot break me!'

I once remarked in exasperation to *Begumsahiba*:

'How could a man like *Sheikh sahib* put such trust in and work for so many years, with a low principled person like Bakshi?'

for my husband and I had known him since 1937 and she replied somewhat impatiently:

"In those days that was the only stuff available."

"Khalida, who was married with three children, went to live with her in-laws on the arrest of her husband, G. M. Shah and her brother-in-law, soon after my husband's arrest. So when she wanted to visit me in Panchwara she had to walk all the way from the Exhibition Grounds to my house and back home. Later she moved in with the rest of the family when we decided to shift to the Saura family house.

"When my husband was finally released first from jail and then from externment from the State and we returned in 1972 to Srinagar, the crowd at the airport and onwards was so huge that it took us seven hours to reach our house."

She is emotionally religious, with a special fondness for the shrines of the *sufi* saints and the rishis. I saw whenever I accompanied her by car outside Srinagar to a function, that at every shrine we passed (and the Valley has many) she would lift her hands in prayer.

She has a great sense of family, adores having her grandchildren round her in the evenings and expects the elders to visit her regularly. Besides being open hearted and affectionate to all her family, friends and party workers, both old and present, she elicits affection and welcomes it.

On the *Haj* and Political Tour of 1965 of Sheikh Abdullah's when she and Afzal Beg accompanied him to U.K., France, U.A.R., Algeria, Saudia Arabia, she met General Nasser in Cairo, who gave a reception for them. She has been on visiting and meeting terms with all the great politicians of this subcontinent—Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Dr. Khan Sahib, Jai Parkash Narain, Indira Gandhi,

Miradullah Sarabhai and numerous others such as Lady Mountbatten, the poets Hafiz Jullundhri and Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

Sheikh Abdullah returned to power as Chief Minister of the State in 1975, after a gap of twenty-two years and the signing of the Kashmir Accord. When State Elections were held in 1977 he, now seventy-two years of age, suffered a severe heart attack and it was his wife who took over and organised the campaign against the Janata Party along with Mirza Afzal Beg, then Deputy Chief Minister of the State.

Then in the State Elections of 1983 she fought in the same way for her son, Dr. Farooq to help his National Conference win against the Congress (I) Party of Indira Gandhi.

Nephew Sheikh Nazir, now Secretary General of the National Conference, Jammu and Kashmir, told me that during the State elections of June, 1983 when the Congress Party (I) of Indira Gandhi did its best to topple the National Conference Party created by Sheikh Abdullah and then headed by his son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Begum Abdullah proved her weight in gold. For twenty days he, Mr. Habibullah, *Begumsahiba's* Security Officer, her personal servant, Abdul Ghani and she, toured the whole of the rural areas in which the Party had put up candidates, she making as many as twenty speeches a day, some in *Gujri*, some in *Kashmiri* and never having more than 3-4 hours of sleep a night. Sometimes she did not even remember the date or the day of the week, only that she had to put in an all-in-all fight to obtain victory at the polls for the party founded by her husband and now her son's. From 10th May onwards the four used to leave Srinagar early in the morning. The Party workers would go ahead to inform the villagers that *Begumsahiba* was coming. In some places people waited until 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. for her so she had to stop at every small village. She would cover two constituences in 24 hours. Once they stopped at fifty places in twenty-four hours and reached home at 4 a.m.

I witnessed her versatility as a speaker at the *Urs* of Pir Zaman Shah of Malamkam village, near Wular Lake. He is a supporter of Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference and has a large following of devotees in the State. Each year in August he has an *Urs*, attended by all his devotees, who camp in the grounds around his hillside house and are fed by him. Jammu Region is multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious and here 250 dialects are spoken, while

the Valley has *Kashmiris* and also the tribes such as *Bhakkarwals* and *Gujjars*, who move from place to place along with their cattle.

The major portion of the *Pir's* devotees were from Jammu Region, speaking *Dogri*, *Punjabi* and understanding Urdu. In the Valley the *Kashmiris* speak *Kashmiri* and understand Urdu, the *Gujjars* and *Bhakkarwals* speak *Gujri*. *Begumsahiba* spoke for more than an hour, first in *Kashmiri*, then at murmurs from the Jammu-ites she switched to Urdu, then at murmurs from the *Gujjars* and *Bhakkarwals* to *Gujri*, all with equal ease.

The amount of effort she put in for those 20 days would have broken a younger woman, but for one who has now reached her seventies the achievement was phenomenal.

In June at a *tehsil* in Doda they were returning home and had been held up so that their jeep was second instead of the first, as was the usual pattern. As they all turned a bend suddenly a jeep coming from the opposite direction dashed deliberately against their first jeep, which was by chance ahead of *Begumsahiba's* so she was saved from what appeared to be a deliberate accident.

Sheikh Abdullah, who sacrificed more than fifty years of his life and his health in working for the fulfilment of his ideal of the New Kashmir, couldn't have had a more loyal and dedicated wife, mother and sagacious political partner than Akbar Jehan, and receiving from them a share of the reverence which they always held for her husband. She was the person who could give him peace and solace in his tempestuous life. No wonder that his pet name for her was "Ruhi".

SURAIYA ALI

Suraiya Ali is the youngest and liveliest of Sheikh Abdullah's children. A Lecturer in the Maulana Azad Women's College in Srinagar she takes a great interest in the cultural activities of the students. There is a group for folk and classical music and singing and one for traditional dances of all the three areas of the State—Jammu, Laddakh and the Valley, each group having a professional teacher. When V.I.Ps. visited the State or college functions were organised a cultural show, arranged by the students under the supervision of Suraiya in which they projected the cultural and traditional music, song and dance of the State, would be given.

The hobby of the youngest son, Dr. Mustafa is hunting and fishing, of which there is plenty in the forests, mountains and valleys. Dr. Farooq's hobby, when he has time to indulge it, is classical music and singing.

When their father was arrested in May, 1946 in the "Quit Kashmir" movement they all went to live in the *Saura* family house. From this house underground work also continued to be carried on by some of the National Conference workers such as Ghulam Mohiuddin Kara. Their grandfather had died in 1940 so during the "Quit Kashmir" movement they were supported by their maternal grandmother, who died in 1960.

In 1946 the five children were without their father for 18 months at the ages of 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 years, when he was jailed and then again in 1953 for nearly eleven years from the ages of 11, 13, 15, 17, 19. At that time, August, 1953 the whole family were holidaying up in Gulmarg, when the hut was surrounded by the army in the middle of the night and Suraiya's parents taken off, while the rest of the family followed to Srinagar, where violent protest demonstrations took place and hundreds of people were arrested. Think of the trauma, imagine what happens to family unity in such circumstances, when the father makes a decision of what is best for the children of his nation and not only of those of his own family, who are adolescent children of an age when the influence of the father is most important for them!

No wonder that when again he and his wife were served with an order of externment in April 1965 on their return from Saudi

Arabia, and were sent to South India, the younger daughter Suraiya who accompanied her mother to stay there for 2½ years with the father, said:

"For the first time in my life I got to know him intimately. One thing that I learnt from Papa was not to idle away one's time. He engaged a steno. to teach me typing and shorthand and a tutor to teach him Tamil. Our life though in adversity was regulated."

Learning Tamil was understandable on the part of the one time President of the All India States People's Conference. Sheikh Abdullah believed that the languages of the minorities and of the States should be recognised. I was told by the daughter of Master Tara Singh, Jugindar Kaur, whom I met in Amritsar in October, 1983 and who had lived in West Bengal as well as Tamil Nadu, that if one speaks to the locals in either English or the language of that State one will receive an answer but if one speaks in *Hindi*, which they do not recognise as being their language, one is ignored.

Then when *Sheikh sahib* was re-arrested in April, 1965, later externed from the State and finally allowed to return to stay in 1972 the two elder sons went to London for further studies, leaving only the youngest son, Dr. Mustafa.

In 1955, his father being in jail, Farooq was not able to secure admission to a medical college in the State and had to go to Jaipur Medical College for his M.B.,B.S. The same thing happened to nephew Sheikh Nazir, *Sheikh sahib's* adopted son. It was intended that he should qualify in Engineering but again admission was not given in the State College so after completing his B.Sc., he went to Aligarh University to do LLB.

Khalida was also married at the age of 14 years, in 1948, which was a very traumatic time in Jammu and Kashmir. There were food shortages as the Pindi-Srinagar route had been closed and because the Banihal Tunnel had not by then been made, this Jammu-Srinagar road used to become blocked by snow in the winter so that supplies were often held up on the way to Srinagar. Tourism trade at such a critical time was dead and people's livelihood was gone. Sheikh Abdullah himself had to go to the United Nations Session in New York in January, 1948 as a member of the Indian delegation, after having taken over as Chief Emergency Administrator on October 30th, 1947 in a State having a multitude of problems.

Suraiya related to me the various difficulties they faced as a family under the Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad regime.

Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad gave the family an allowance of Rs. 1,000/- per month, which was insufficient. They shifted to the house of their uncle, Ghulam Qadir then, thinking he would be harassed, again shifted to the house of G. M. Shah, Sheikh Abdullah's son-in-law. But then he was arrested, also his brother and nephew. So they had to search for a house on rent and found one in Panchwara, rented from an old *Pandit*. From there they all used to go to their schools on cycles, and after 1957 they shifted to the Saura house, where they remained until Suraiya's marriage in 1971. Then the family came to their mother's present house in Maulana Azad Road.

Suraiya had completed her M.A. in 1963 and taken up a job, but had to leave this to go to Kodai Kanal and join her parents, when *Sheikh sahib* was exiled there in 1965 and her mother refused to remain there alone. In 1968 he fell ill and diabetes was diagnosed, so he was brought to Delhi for treatment and remained for 2½ months in hospital, before being removed to a house in Kotla Lane, along with Suraiya and her mother.

After Suraiya's *nikah* in Srinagar in 1971 she returned to Delhi. As her father was still not allowed to return to the State her "*walima*" was arranged in Srinagar by an old family friend, Khawaja Saaduddin Shawl. *Sheikh sahib* finally returned in March, 1972.

Suraiya was especially appreciative of the sympathy and help given to them as a family during these very difficult years by certain people—for example there was their tutor, now Professor Satish Raina and Principal of Sri Partap College, Srinagar since 1981.

It is of interest to note that the one ambition of Suraiya's charming thirteen year old daughter, Nyla, as of date, is to be a woman politician. Should one comment that the sufferings of their elders in that profession sit lightly upon the shoulders of the young or that they are inspired by the sacrifices and achievements of such elders?

To be a son or daughter of an illustrious political leader can be both a blessing and a curse. You bask in his reflected glory while feeling the burden of living up to his celebrated name!

DR. FAROOQ ABDULLAH AND HIS BROTHERS

Dr. Farooq Abdullah was born in Kashmir in 1937, the second child of his father, Sheikh Abdullah, who by that time had already been to jail four times.

When Sheikh Abdullah was arrested in 1953 and jailed, first for five years and then again within sixty days until 1964, Farooq was sixteen years of age, a time when an adolescent needs the care and guidance of a father. Through those years he saw his father only occasionally when the family were allowed to visit him and stay with him in jail during their vacations. By the time Sheikh Abdullah was released in April, 1964 after a period of nearly eleven years of incarceration he was 27 years of age, an M.B.,B.S. and holding down a job in Srinagar. In May, 1964 he was a member of his father's team which came to Pakistan for discussions on the future of Kashmir. With the sudden demise of Pandit Nehru the mission had to be abandoned. At that time G. M. Sadiq was Prime Minister of the State. In 1965 Farooq left for U.K. in the expectation of studying further.

Instead he took up a hospital assignment, when he met and married Molly Shehnaz, a qualified nurse and started a family. He kept in touch with his fellow *Kashmiris*, both in Great Britain and Azad Kashmir, visited Srinagar in 1971 for the *walima* of his younger sister and finally returned to settle in 1974, in time for the Elections of 1975, when Sheikh Abdullah took over as Chief Minister of the State.

Farooq began to take an interest in his father's politics, was a member of Lok Sabha, was appointed Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in August, 1981, Minister for Health in 1982 and after his father's death on September 8th, 1982 took over as Chief Minister of the State.

After Farooq's return to the State Sheikh Abdullah, then seventy years of age and of indifferent health, depended upon him a great deal in administration. He was especially dependent upon his help in obtaining and editing material for his Memoirs, which were dictated in Urdu and then translated into English. These Memoirs have been ready since 1982 but for reasons of diplomacy with the Union Government had not so far been released. As an English publisher in Delhi told me in 1982:

"Sheikh Abdullah, strangely enough, has been harsher in his criticism of Indian leaders than he has of Muhammad Ali Jinnah."

Tariq, born after Farooq, is the most sensitive of all the five children and suffered most ill effect from the ostracisation of people and school-fellows during the *Bakshi* regime, while at a vulnerable age, so that he has become a loner, not mixing with people and not being able to stick to any one career. He is unmarried, as is the youngest son, Dr. Mustafa, who is, however, outgoing and friendly and holds down a job as Head of a Medical Institution.

Farooq organised the State Elections in June, 1983 and his party, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, was returned to power with a good majority, but after eleven months the Congress (I) Union Government, with the connivance of G. M. Shah, manoeuvred to topple Farooq's legally elected government and instal a Puppet government, after having split the National Conference into two halves, with Khalida Shah, wife of G. M. Shah and elder sister of Dr. Farooq as its Chair person.

Farooq as a person is very outgoing. Six feet, four inches tall like his father, he has great charm and makes friends easily. He is very popular with the masses, both rural and urban. His hobbies are music and golf. When he was in power in 1983-84 he took great interest in developing the cultures of the three regions—Jammu, Laddakh and the Valley in the form of folk music, dancing and singing. V. I. Ps. who came to the State were always regaled with such shows.

Farooq is to say the least unconventional. When he was Chief Minister, if he was ready to leave home for office and the driver had not appeared he would jump into the jeep and drive himself, unlike his father, who was more conservative. He also likes to drive a motor cycle.

He has four children, the eldest a son, Omar and three daughters, Safia, Hina and Sara. All four adore their father and he gives them special attention, remembering the lack of a father's attention in his own youth. They are typical *Kashmiri* children in spite of having an English mother and having spent some early years in England—eating their rice from a "*thal*", going with their father to purchase roasted maize cobs from his favourite stall, attending *Kashmiri* marriages. They are unspoilt children, enjoying the simple things of life. Their

mother, Molly Shehnaz, tall, slim, serene and a beauty, plays the roles of wife, mother, hostess and career woman in one. Like a typical housewife she is up early in the morning to see that the children's school uniforms are in order, lunch boxes packed, husband's clothes ready and breakfast for all on the table before she leaves for her own duties as matron in the nearby polyclinic of the Sher-i-Kashmir Medical Institute.

Farooq is a devoted son and meets his mother Begum Abdullah in the morning and evening. It was she who had the responsibility of bringing up all five children in their early years, when their father was in and out of jail. It is she, a seasoned politician, who advises Farooq in political matters and when he needs to go to Delhi she accompanies him, and she still goes with him and his henchmen out to the rural areas to perform her share as a speaker at the massive meetings which are organised for the rural masses.

Dr. Farooq said to me the last time I saw him in the summer of 1984:

"Two things I have learnt from life—to have faith in oneself and faith in God. If you believe in these two things then the people are with you."

HOW THE PUNJAB REMEMBERS SHEIKH ABDULLAH?

FAIZ AHMED FAIZ

When I reached Lahore after crossing the Wagah border I learnt from my sister that my brother-in-law, Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz, who had recently had a very adventurous evacuation from the turmoil of Beirut, was expected in Lahore in January, 1983. Because of his old associations with Sheikh Abdullah, who had also performed his "*nikah*" with my sister in our house in Srinagar in October, 1941, I decided to secure from him his assessment of Sheikh Abdullah's place in the history of the political movement of this subcontinent. Here is what he said to me:

"I myself went to Kashmir for the first time in 1929 after I had given my Intermediate examination from the Punjab University. I went for a holiday from Amritsar *via* Jammu and spent the night in Bathote. I found that the postmaster's son was a fellow student of mine from Sialkot schooldays and spent the night with him. Then I went on by bus to Srinagar for the first time and without knowing anybody. I met yet another old class-fellow of mine from Sialkot—a *Kashmiri* named Ahad. He was then a student in Srinagar and belonged to a village near Gulmarg. I spent the summer vacation there and he spoke seriously to me about the miserable condition of his fellow *Kashmiris*. That was the first time I became conscious of the condition of *Kashmiris* at that time as a problem.

"The first *Kashmiri* movement started in my home town, Sialkot, about 1930, as there was a large *Kashmiri* population there. This was in support of the movement which had already started in Kashmir. Many people from Sialkot went to jail in the demonstrations demanding various rights for the *Kashmiris* and freedom from their *Dogra* oppressors and it was during these days that one heard the name of Sheikh Abdullah and the Muslim Conference. It was in 1931 that a Kashmir Committee

was formed in Sialkot, as a branch of the All India Kashmir Committee, to redress the grievances of the Muslims of Kashmir.

"I had met Sheikh Abdullah earlier for the first time in Aligarh when I went for the University celebrations as my elder brother, Tufail, was a science student there and a class-fellow of Sheikh Abdullah (1928-29). In those days he wore a beard.

"After that I went every summer to Kashmir for the summer vacation and first met Sheikh Abdullah there in 1936. I had friends in the Srinagar College and I met him in the house of a student. By that time the Progressive Writers' Movement in India had been started, which meant a Leftist movement. Sheikh Abdullah's movement for the uplift of the *Kashmiris* also became part of the whole mass movement—for civil rights, trade unions, students' problems.

"In 1937, 1938 and 1939 I met *Sheikh sahib*. I even participated in the processions of 1938 in Srinagar when he was arrested in August. Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad were by now also involved and we all became close friends, along with Dr. Taseer, who later became my brother-in-law. In 1940 and 1941 I was also in Kashmir and of course had my "*nikah*" performed there in the latter year, on October 28th, by *Sheikh sahib*. Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq was one of the signatories to my *nikahnama*.

"At that time Jammu and Kashmir National Conference was in the vanguard of the Radical movement in the entire sub-continent. Politics in the Punjab were dominated by feudal lords. But the National Conference adopted "Naya Kashmir" as its manifesto, which was much ahead of the times and represented a revolutionary trend. I was one of those who had a hand in giving advice on the drafting of the document, which was published in 1944.

"It was during these days that one saw the process of the complete transformation of the *Kashmiris* in all ways. Sheikh Abdullah had become the symbol and the leader and the ideologist and the instrument of this whole upheaval of the working classes. Their whole mentality was transformed. The women also became transformed. To fully understand Kashmir

one should see the way people responded to him. That was not simply politics. The personality of the people became completely changed. He created for the *Kashmiri* a sense of selfhood as Allama Iqbal called it. He discovered for them their personality and he is one of the few people of this sub-continent who created a movement out of nothing. There are only one or two other people who have done this, e.g. Mahatma Gandhi.

"That this contribution was the awakening and inspiration which electrified his people nobody can deny. The changes which took place later, whatever is known of them, were the direct contribution of Sheikh Abdullah. Thus Kashmir became a part of national politics.

"Leaving aside his convictions the important thing to recognise about Sheikh Abdullah is that he was responsible for the transformation—entire mental and physical transformation—of his people. We who were in touch saw this happening within the span of a few years.

"One can argue as to whether his contribution was good in some aspects of his political rule but whatever Kashmir has achieved or done, he was responsible for it and this was because of his total and complete identification with his people. He knew their mental make-up. His mind was in tune with his people. To declassify yourself, to shed your mental superiority, your cliquishness, is something unique, but he did this.

"In April or May, 1947 Sheikh Abdullah sent me a message from Ramgarh Fort where he was detained, delivered through Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and G. M. Sadiq that if the Muslim League would declare that the future of the Indian Princely States would be decided by the people, not the Princes, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference might consider opting for Pakistan. I conveyed this message to the Muslim League leadership, but they were already in negotiation with the *Maharaja* and his then Prime Minister, Pandit Ram Chand Kak. If at that time we had dealt with Sheikh Abdullah instead of administrators we would have been more successful in bringing Kashmir into Pakistan."

In the interview which he had with Mr. Muhammad Yousaf

Taing, Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir Languages Academy, Srinagar, on March 14th, 1984 (as reported elsewhere), an interview at which I was present, Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz said of Sheikh Abdullah:

"I am proud that I have been close to this great man of modern times for about half a century. During this period I saw the fate of a full-fledged nationality of the subcontinent being revolutionized by the efforts of a single individual. The political awakening of Kashmir and its people and the recognition of their identity is a new but durable chapter in the history of the subcontinent which will always be attributed to Sher-i-Kashmir. He will for ever live as a symbol of this identity."

In a letter to B. K. Kaula of October 29th, 1953, i.e. two months after *Sheikh sahib's* arrest Pandit Nehru writes:

"A leader must always have a sense of the public. He cannot do some things, because he senses they would create difficulties. We have to deal with human beings as individuals and in the mass, and we must know the art of getting into their minds and hearts and not merely imagine that any logical argument must prevail."

NAWAB MUSHTAQ AHMED GURMANI

I had an interview with Nawab Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani, whom I had known since 1941, at his Lahore residence a few weeks before his death on June 29, 1981. His health had been deteriorating for a long time but he was kind enough to meet me, reclining on a couch in the verandah.

As an Additional Secretary in the Central Government after leaving Punjab politics and an ardent Muslim Leaguer *Gurmani sahib* was in close touch with Quaid-i-Azam in Delhi up to 1947. After the creation of Pakistan he became Minister for Kashmir Affairs for a few years.

My husband had worked with *Gurmani sahib* in both Simla and Delhi from 1943-47, when he was the head of the Information Directorate and as the time for the Independence of India and creation of Pakistan drew near both were concerned over the question of what would be the position of all the States of India with a preponderance of Muslim population and in particular of Kashmir, which had a *Dogra Maharaja*, which was contiguous with the area which was to become West Pakistan and which had always had such a close relationship with it because of economic relations, common religion and common language of a large area.

According to *Gurmani sahib* my husband had actually twice in early 1945 and 1946, when Sheikh Abdullah had come to Delhi, asked him to request Quaid-i-Azam to meet him, which did not materialise. Unfortunately there was the background of the meeting of the two in Srinagar in the summer of 1944 and their disagreement over the question of retaining only Muslim Conference in Kashmir and refusing to accept the separate identity of National Conference in State politics. *Gurmani sahib* continued:

"It was in early 1946 that Taseer brought Sheikh Abdullah to me for the second time and wanted me to arrange a meeting with Quaid-i-Azam. I myself did not want to meet him because I considered him to be devious and Quaid-i-Azam's reply to the request was reported to be:

'If he wants to see me let him write a request and then I will consider.'"

Sheikh Abdullah was not prepared to do this, for in any case he had no official standing.

Mr. Muhammad Amin Gani, a schoolboy pupil of Sheikh Abdullah in the Government High School in Srinagar in 1930, who entered Government service there and came over to Pakistan in 1948, where he again took up Government service, reported to me in Rawalpindi in February, 1985:

"In 1967 Hafiz Jullundhri, poet and a very dear friend of Sheikh Abdullah, told me that in early May, 1946 he, Maulana Daud Gaznavi and others made a final attempt to bring about a rapprochement between Sheikh Abdullah and Quaid-i-Azam in Delhi. Quaid-i-Azam agreed to a meeting with them and the date and time for an appointment was fixed, but when the party accompanied by Sheikh Abdullah reached the Quaid's house and were waiting in the drawing room, they were given the message that the Quaid had changed his mind. The party left in extreme disappointment."

In this connection I remarked to *Gurmani sahib* that several persons had told me that the strained relations and the lack of coming to terms between Quaid-i-Azam and Sheikh Abdullah were due to Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and Mr. K. H. Khurshid, who had dissuaded him from meeting Sheikh Abdullah for discussions, for they, having both been members of the Muslim Conference in Jammu and Kashmir while Sheikh Abdullah was head of the National Conference, did not want him to have any position of importance in a settlement over Kashmir.

However, *Gurmani sahib* was very emphatic that Mr. K. H. Khurshid was a fresh graduate and a young man in his early twenties when Quaid-i-Azam took him on and could not possibly have influenced him in making a decision of this sort.

Abdul Majid Salik, editor of "*Inquilab*", wrote in a memorial number of "*Chitan Weekly*" (Dec. 11, 1950) after the death of Dr. M. D. Taseer, that

"If we had only listened to the advice of Dr. Taseer there would have been no Kashmir problem."

Gurmani sahib was then posted to Bahawalpur as Prime Minister

and he wanted my husband to go with him and take up a job there, but he refused because he was so concerned about the Kashmir problem. He insisted to *Gurmani sahib* that there was still a chance of bringing about a rapprochement with Sheikh Abdullah, so the former told him:

"There is no need for you to wait for anybody's permission, go ahead if you think there is still a possibility, but Sheikh Abdullah should be reasonable in his terms, i.e. join as a State of Pakistan, have autonomy in his State but foreign affairs, finance, communications should be with the parent government."

Gurmani sahib said that the Muslim League leaders had already agreed to the above. At that time the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir was still R. C. Kak.

On a visit to Kashmir and Rawalpindi in October, 1945, Sir Archibald Wavell, Viceroy of India from October, 1943-May, 1946 had written about R. C. Kak on October 17th, 1945:—

"The new Prime Minister, Kak, a *Kashmiri Pandit* with a British wife, is clever, plausible and quite useless in a crisis, I should say. He has been a power behind the throne for sometime and is said to have ousted the last two or three Prime Ministers by his intrigues. Kashmir is likely to be the seat of political trouble before long; there are two factions, both Muslim (80% of the population is Muslim), one of which supports and is supported by the Congress, the other Muslim League. Nehru, Azad and Jinnah have all visited the State lately and have agitated."¹

Gurmani sahib said that Prime Minister R. C. Kak had talked to him earlier in 1947, when he had convinced the latter that in view of the communications problem there was only one way out—Kashmir should be with Pakistan. Only Pakistan could protect the Hindu *Maharaja* of a Muslim majority state. By his acceding to Pakistan it would then be to the interest of Pakistan to protect him. Prime Minister Kak, a tough administrator with authoritarian ways, had agreed to this. But then he was dismissed by the *Maharaja* on 11th August and replaced by General Janak Singh and then Mehr Chand Mahajan, Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, a fanatic Arya Samajist, who could justify the killing of innocent Muslims on the ground that equally innocent Hindus had been killed elsewhere.

How did the appointment of Mehr Chand Mahajan come about when it did? He belonged to Kangra as did the *Maharani* of Jammu and Kashmir and he was a close friend of the family. He was their legal adviser and had also been legal adviser to the Jammu and Kashmir Government. When the Punjab Boundary Commission was announced on June 3rd, 1947 by Lord Mountbatten, Mehr Chand Mahajan was made a member. The *Maharani* came down to Lahore and stayed in Faletti's Hotel. She met Mehr Chand Mahajan and told him that he should see what would be in the best interests of Kashmir so that some route from the State to India should be constructed. For this he would be offered the Premiership of Jammu and Kashmir Government if he acted according to the wishes of the *Dogra* Government, after the final work of the Boundary Commission was completed. Thus when the Boundary Commission had announced the completion of Pathankote District, through which a route was made from India to Kashmir the *Maharaja* fulfilled the promise made to *Mahajan* and he was given the reward of the Prime Ministership of the State in the second week of September, 1947. So the Kashmir Government and Indian Congress were already plotting before the release of Sheikh Abdullah at the end of September, 1947.

Gurmani sahib continued:

"I informed Quaid-i-Azam about the talks and suggested Taseer should be sent to Kashmir to finalise negotiations because I as Prime Minister of Bahawalpur could not myself go to negotiate about Kashmir. Quaid-i-Azam considered Bahawalpur as the soft belly of Pakistan—there had been a lot of trouble there and he wanted me to remain there. He said:

'I cannot let you go, it is out of the question.'

Gurmani sahib added:

"Taseer should have been sent along with Mr. Ikramullah, a senior administrator, but instead Major A. S. B. Shah was sent—the wrong man—to persuade the *Maharaja* to accede to Pakistan. He was a junior officer and ignorant of Kashmir's political background and had to deal with highly experienced administrators like Mehr Chand Mahajan, V. P. Menon and Gopalaswami Ayyanger."

Mehr Chand Mahajan, the newly appointed Prime Minister is on record as having said:

'Major Shah was in Srinagar with a whip in one hand and a letter of Accession in the other. He had been trying to persuade General Janak Singh and Mr. Ram Lal Batra, newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister, to advise the *Maharaja* to accede to Pakistan. Neither of the two administrators had given him any satisfactory reply. He was keen to have an assurance of the State's Accession to Pakistan or in the alternative, a negative assurance that I would not advise the *Maharaja* to accede to India. I told him this would take some time but he was not prepared to wait. When I found he had come there almost with an ultimatum, I said:

'If you raise the blockade and allow food and cloth and petrol to enter the State I will discuss the matter with you.

'He agreed to persuade Mr. Jinnah to remove the blockade and sent a telegram to him at Lahore but got no favourable reply. He then saw me again and said:

'Mr. Jinnah invites you to Lahore. Go there and have a talk with him.

'I was in no mood to fall into *Pakistani* hands. I declined the invitation as the object was to coerce me into securing the State's Accession to Pakistan.'²

Malik Wazir Ali, Secretary to the Prime Minister, confirmed what had been related to me by Nawab Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani, that Major A. S. B. Shah was sent by our administration still in Lahore to Srinagar to negotiate with the Kashmir Government. The matter was discussed in the presence of Malik Wazir Ali by Liaquat Ali Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali and Sikander Mirza. This happened in the second week of October. Liaquat Ali Khan had come to Lahore from Karachi in the first week.

When Major Shah returned from Srinagar he reported that the *Maharaja* had refused to meet him and he had been told by the officials he met that the sending of essential supplies by the 'Pindi route, which had stopped in mid-September, must be resumed. Thus he returned without having achieved anything as the Kashmir Government would not make any commitment.

Malik Wazir Ali felt that Sheikh Abdullah did try his best to come to some agreement with Pakistan, in preference to India, but he alone was not in a position to be able to let Kashmir join Pakistan, he would in any case have needed military support, of which at that time Pakistan did not have sufficient inside the country, as there was the problem just then of the influx of thousands of refugees coming into West Punjab, who had to be helped.

After Sheikh Abdullah's release from jail on September 29th, 1947 and my husband's meeting with him in Srinagar on October 2nd, he sent Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq back to Lahore with him for further discussions, where he joined Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad in Delhi Muslim Hotel.

Gurmani sahib continued:

"A plan was discussed by some Muslim Leaguers that Kashmir should give the signal, actually around the 27th October and Pakistan would send in some troops immediately to help Sheikh Abdullah to take over in his State as Prime Minister, after having ousted the *Maharaja*. For this plan he would need Pakistan's support.

"The National Conference leaders' reply to the suggestion of sending armed help to the State to help take over from the *Maharaja* was:

'Certainly not—no armed help should come. There has already been bloodshed and even if this scheme succeeds we would be the slaves of Mamdot.'

"Then Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan (of Baramulla) at that time posted in N.W.F.P., Major Khurshid Anwar, Ghulam Muhammad Jeweller (a *Kashmiri*), Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan, convinced Liaquat Ali Khan that instead of this plan Pakistan should send in tribesmen from Peshawar to take over Kashmir. Liaquat Ali Khan had come to know that some other scheme was being discussed so in order to forestall any such thing the tribesmen plot was planned with secrecy from everyone.

"Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Minister for Communications, was confounded when this actually happened and it was done without the knowledge of Quaid-i-Azam. This group expected

that Sheikh Abdullah would welcome these tribesmen but he thought that without his signal Pakistan had sent them in. This was our second mistake."

It seems that it was against the directives of Quaid-i-Azam that some self seekers and ambitious politicians took it upon themselves to complicate the question of the liberation of Kashmir. Perhaps it is as yet too early to put responsibility upon the real culprits of the creation of the problem of Kashmir. To write contemporary history is difficult as real material is not easily officially available to a writer.

"*Pakistan Times*", 31-10-47 says:

"It is clear to the Government of Pakistan that the *Pathan* raid was provoked by the use of Kashmir troops to attack and kill Muslims in Kashmir and Jammu and for this the policy of the Kashmir Government was solely responsible."

Certainly the looting, killing and driving out of the Muslims of Poonch into Pakistan occurred before the tribal invasion started on October 22nd and its members arrived in Muzaffarabad on October 24th.

By September, the *Dogra* army of the *Maharaja* was said to have started a reign of terror in Poonch. Sheikh Abdullah's explanation of how this trouble started, made when he was speaking at an At Home given in his honour in New Delhi on the 21st October, after he had arrived on the 16th and was staying as the guest of Pandit Nehru (who also received him at the airport) was reported thus in "*Pakistan Times*", 22-10-47.

"The present struggles in Poonch, a feudatory of Kashmir, were because of the unwise policy adopted in the State. The people of Poonch who suffered under their local ruler and again under the Kashmir Durbar who was the overlord of the Poonch ruler, had started a people's movement for the redress of their grievances. It was not communal. The Kashmir Government sent their troops and there was panic in Poonch."

"*Pakistan Times*", 9-10-47 and 12-10-47 gives the names of the villages from which Muslims were driven out across the Kohalla bridge: From Bagh and Sudhooiti *tehsils*, village Salran, Chhimilkot Hill, Sarnag, Mandri, Chiralla Shamiati, Thorar, Parchheut, Taeet,

Moong, Dhilkote, Palandri, Tanaala, Saliaan, Hawal Danna, Cheerala, and that *Dogras* and Sikhs had joined hands in looting and killing. From Murree one could see, at night the burning houses in the Poonch villages down in the valley beyond Kohalla. People's crops were burnt, even beddings.

Starting from the middle of October in the Jammu Region many thousands were killed and wounded and hundreds of girls abducted, including the daughter of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, who was restored to her father in 1954. According to Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir from October 24th, 1947, in an interview with me in February, 1984 in Lahore, in August, September and October there were killings in Jammu, Udhampur and Kathua. All this followed after the entry into Jammu Region of large numbers of Sikh and Hindu refugees from Pakistan areas.

At that time the administration of Jammu Region was entirely in the hands of the Hindus, who controlled the telegraph and telephone facilities so that no messages or requests for help could be conveyed to Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah or Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad in Srinagar of what was happening in Jammu city itself and all the villages of the Region. Even the surviving members of families who tried to flee to Pakistan were systematically butchered on the way. This fact made for another category of people who had to come over to Pakistan in October, 1947, unintentionally. Those were the Jammu and Kashmir Government officials who normally moved along with the Darbar from Srinagar to Jammu in October of each year for the six winter months. Because of lack of petrol in Srinagar, as supplies were not coming from Pakistan, these officials came down to Sialkot thinking to get petrol there for their onward journey to Jammu. But they found that there was no question of going on, especially as by now the news had spread of the wholesale massacres of Muslims which were taking place in Jammu city and the surrounding villages. One such was our old friend, Dr. Noor Hussain, Health Officer, Jammu and Kashmir.

The following Press reports will show the conditions at that time:—

"Pakistan Times", 23-10-47

"70,000 non-Muslim refugees are in Jammu. The policy is to wipe out the Muslim population to make room for them.

"In Sri Ranbirsingh Pura there were mass massacres of Kashmir Muslims. Gangs of Sevak Sangh and I.N.A. assisted by *Dogra* troops have butchered hundreds of Muslims. One of the brothers of Chaudhry Hamidullah, President of the Muslim Conference, is missing. All along the 40 miles border from Kathua and Suchetgarh hundreds of Muslim villages were burnt. The fires could be seen from Sialkot."

"Pakistan Times", 28-10-47

"October 23rd-24th, 50,000 Muslim refugees entered Pakistan territory in Chaprar area in Sialkot district." "The *Dogra* pogrom in Jammu is to pave the way for their Accession to the other Dominion by driving the Muslims out."

"Pakistan Times", 29-10-47

"Mr. Reddy, former editor of *"Kashmir Times"* was expelled from Kashmir for his pro-Pakistan views. Arriving in Lahore on October 26th he said:

'From the hotel room in Jammu where I was detained I counted as many as 24 villages burning in one night'."

"Pakistan Times", 31-10-47

"90,000 Muslim refugees are stranded in Jammu and a refugee camp in Jammu has 20,000 refugees, reported from Sialkot on October 29th."

"Pakistan Times", 29-10-47—Editorial

"In the streets of Srinagar Hindu and Muslim blood mingled together when the Kashmir people unitedly demanded freedom from the *Dogra* bondage and both Hindu and Muslim patriots have rotted together in the *Maharaja's* snake infested dungeons. Now the ruler and his boot lickers have one recourse left to survive—to split the people and let one half kill the other half with the help of the police and the soldiery."

Mr. M. A. Aziz, now of Abbottabad, a former member of the All India States Muslim League Executive, and a colleague of my husband's in Sri Partap College, Srinagar in 1941, wrote to me about

Sheikh Abdullah on 18-11-83:

"Who could decipher his emotions—this leader now committed to a secular state—at the grim sight of the great slaughter at Tawi river banks in the month of November, 1947, by Hindus on Muslims, when your friend Begum Abdullah cried her heart out?" "My family, along with half a million of my compatriots, had to leave their ancestral homes because of certain principles which every free human being cherishes. The human rights enshrined in the U.N. Charter entitles all people to determine their way of life and live under a political system of their own choice. But unfortunately this has been denied to us."

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JUSTICE ANWAR-UL-HAQ

I met Justice Anwar-ul-Haq, now retired, at his residence in Lahore, on 28-7-83. He told me:

"In October, 1947, I was District Magistrate, Rawalpindi. Since September essential supplies for Kashmir such as sugar, salt, petrol, kerosene were being held up at Sialkot and Rawalpindi as conditions were uncertain and transporters were not willing to risk travelling onwards to Srinagar. At this time Dr. M. D. Taseer, an old friend of Sheikh Abdullah's was deputed to go to Srinagar for discussions with him as he was to be released from jail on September 29th, where he had been since his arrest in May, 1946. Nawab Mamdot was the inspirer of the idea that in order to send Dr. Taseer a reason had to be found. So I was deputed to go to Srinagar with him for discussions with the authorities about the holding up of these supplies and Dr. Taseer was specially deputed to go with me as my adviser.

"The two of us left from Rawalpindi on October 1st and when we reached Srinagar booked in at Nedous Hotel. The next morning both went to the Secretariat to enquire what were the supplies which were being held up and where, and I had discussions with the concerned authorities. I met the Deputy Prime Minister, Rai Bahadur Ram Lal Batra. Taseer went off from there and was absent the whole day. The Ministry people told me what were the supplies which were being held up and I promised to do what I could. When Taseer returned in the evening he told me he had a very fruitful discussion with Sheikh Abdullah and he had agreed to meet Quaid-i-Azam. Crowds of people had come to the hotel to meet him. We two then returned to Lahore on October 3rd and Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq was sent with us to meet the necessary authorities and work out the details of a possible merger of Kashmir with Pakistan. My going with Dr. Taseer on this occasion was really a cover-up for his being sent on this mission."

Justice M. Y. Saraf has mentioned in his book, that in reply to a telegram of October 15th from Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Mahajan, Liaquat Ali Khan sent a long telegram in which he wrote:

"As regards the alleged action of the West Punjab Government

in blocking the passage of petrol, cloth, food and stoppage of transport we have already informed you that the West Punjab Government have been asked to provide you with all reasonable assistance in these matters.

"It is entirely wrong to attribute difficulties in transport which have arisen owing to circumstances beyond the control of the West Punjab Government to the unfriendly intentions of the Government or to regard it as an act of coercion of the State. We have already sent a special officer to discuss with you the problems arising in respect of these matters and to settle ways and means of adjusting the difficulties."¹

This "Special Officer" was of course Justice Anwar-ul-Haq, with my husband sent as "Advisor"

Justice Anwar-ul-Haq agreed with me that Sheikh Abdullah had come on the scene in Kashmir at a time in history when he was most needed by his people, and that the people who were to prepare, mould and train him were also all there at the right time. So it was this combination which set in motion the course of Kashmir's national liberation movement. If all these forces hadn't been present together at the right psychological moment Kashmir's national movement might not have taken root. As he put it:

"This was one of the "ifs" of history".

Later in the summer, when I was in Srinagar, Begum Abdullah also confirmed that Dr. Taseer had come on October 2nd, 1947, to their residence at Saura, Srinagar, to meet her husband.

REFERENCE

¹ Saraf, ex-Justice, M. Y.—"*Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*", Vol. II, p. 828, Ferozsons Lahore, 1979.

SYED MOHSIN SHAH BY HIS SON DR. SYED NASIM SHAH

I had an interview in Lahore in July, 1983, with Dr. Syed Nasim Shah, Judge of the Lahore Supreme Court, son of the late Syed Mohsin Shah, who had been a dedicated and devoted worker for the cause of *Kashmiri* freedom from the *Dogra raj*, especially during the early thirties and whose entry into Kashmir had therefore been banned by the *Maharaja* for the part he had played in this movement, so that he was never able to return there. Judge Nasim Shah quoted a condolence message sent at the time of Syed Mohsin Shah's demise in June, 1969, at the age of 85 years, from a Judge of the High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir:

"His devotion and dedication to the cause of *Kashmiri* freedom, especially during the early thirties would always be remembered by us with gratitude and indebtedness."

Syed Mohsin Shah had, along with other prominent *Kashmiris* settled in the Punjab much earlier, about 1920, started an organisation named the All India Muslim *Kashmiri* Conference, which had as one of its important objects the awarding of scholarships to deserving *Kashmiri* students, one of whom was Sheikh Abdullah in 1925.

In 1927 the government of the *Maharaja* of Jammu and Kashmir asked for applications for the grant of scholarships for studies abroad, but not a single Muslim was selected. All their applications were rejected. Accordingly Syed Mohsin Shah, then General Secretary of the All India Muslim *Kashmiri* Conference lodged a strong protest with the *Maharaja* ("*Inquilab*", 15-10-27).

Justice Nasim Shah told me that as a third year student he vividly remembers that in the winter of 1946, not long before Sheikh Abdullah started his Quit Kashmir movement, he arrived unannounced in Lahore, accompanied by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad. He said:

"Sheikh Abdullah always had great respect for my father because of old associations. On this visit to Lahore he came to our house on Begum Road to pay a courtesy call on my father. As he strode into the room I was overwhelmingly impressed by the sense of confidence, straightforwardness, vigour, which this strikingly tall, brisk man, dressed all in white, made upon me.

He had an overpowering, irresistible vitality. His eyes sparkled with enthusiasm as he spoke. You felt that he was someone in whom you could have complete trust, utterly sincere, completely sure of himself.

"He held a long and animated conversation with my father, as he explained to him the plan for his Quit Kashmir movement against the *Maharaja*, which he was shortly to start. They had a detailed discussion on what would be the repercussions and what would be the result of the movement. Sheikh Abdullah thought the *Maharaja* would not dare to touch him and had complete confidence that he would be successful in his mission.

"My father, being old enough to be *Sheikh sahib's* father, was a more cautious person and warned him that he was underestimating the power of the *Maharaja*, that his movement could not succeed and he would be arrested. *Sheikh sahib* laughed and said:

'What do you know about conditions now, you are still living in the thirties. Things have changed.'

"But my father was not at all reassured. What impressed me most about Sheikh Abdullah in that meeting was the hatred and contempt which he exuded for the *Maharaja* and all he stood for and his determination to throw him out of the State and free his people from his oppression and create his New Kashmir."

No wonder that Maharaja Hari Singh was hated by the majority of his people. One of the princes who together once ruled a third of India's people he had spent a great deal of his time outside his State, in holidaying in Europe and it was while in England before the beginning of the Second World War that the British press was rocked with the exploits of the "notorious Mr. A" as he was called, in order to hide his identity, when he was involved in a scandalous affair with a woman whose husband blackmailed him to the extent of making a large hole in the coffers of his State, the burden of which of course had to be borne by his impoverished subjects.

Sheikh Abdullah started his movement on 15th May, 1946 and was arrested on 19th May, while Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, G. M. Sadiq and D. P. Dhar managed to escape to Lahore. Here they were able to win over the Muslim League press, which openly supported

the movement. "*Zamindar*", "*Nawa-e-Waqt*", "*Inquilab*" and "*Ehsan*" all wrote favourable editorials and these were smuggled into Srinagar and distributed. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad was very active in his campaign from Lahore, Delhi and Bombay.

The Dogras of Jammu Province and the *Kashmiri Pandits* did not participate in the Quit Kashmir movement as it was against the *Maharaja*, but the Communist Party of India did give it their support and both D. P. Dhar and G. M. Sadiq were known to have been since long influenced by them.

According to Zenub Begum, sister of Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, who became Prime Minister after Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad the plan for the Quit Kashmir movement was formulated in Lahore in 1941 by B. P. D. Bedi and his wife, Freda, Fazl Ilahi Qurban, Daniel Latifi, D. P. Dhar, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and Dr. Taseer. This she told me in an interview I had with her in Srinagar on August 26th, 1983.

Justice Nasim Shah continued:

"Here in Pakistan after the Partition people could not forgive Sheikh Abdullah for having accepted Nehru's offer and taken his State into India, but after 1953 when he was arrested by Dr. Karan Singh, *Sadar-i-Riyasat* and jailed without trial for five years and finally set free nearly eleven years later, we all began to feel sympathy for him for what we thought was his betrayal by the Nehru Government."

This change in the public's attitude would have helped to contribute to the tremendous and overwhelming welcome which Sheikh Abdullah was given when he came to Pakistan in May, 1964, after his release a short time earlier from nearly eleven years' detention in Udampur, Kud and Jammu special jails.

SHEIKH ABDUL HAMID OF JAMMU

After the demise of Sheikh Abdullah on September 8th, 1982 there was only one person still left alive of the original eight who in 1931 sparked off the revolt against the oppression of the *Dogra* regime upon the *Kashmiris* and their fight for their basic rights.

This was Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Advocate, originally born in Jammu, who came to Lahore in late 1947. So not long after my return to Lahore from Sheikh Abdullah's *chehlum* in Srinagar in October, 1982 I went to meet him, accompanied by Mr. Kalim Akhtar of the National Press Trust, Lahore, also a Jammu man. Sheikh Abdul Hamid was now ninety years of age, but in his youth was tall and handsome and had the reputation of being the best dressed man in Jammu.

There were originally eight—

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mir-waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah (who very soon developed strong differences with Sheikh Abdullah), Ghulam Nabi Gilkar, Khawaja Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, Mistri Yakub Ali, Maulvi Abdur Rahim and Sheikh Abdul Hamid, Advocate, who was one of the witnesses in *Sheikh sahib's "nikah"* in 1933.

Sheikh Abdul Hamid belonged to a distinguished family of Jammu. His father was a senior Government official, but was also the General Secretary of the Anjuman Islamia, Jammu, which was responsible for the opening of a number of schools and orphanages. Sheikh Abdul Hamid was one of seven brothers. He lived with his father but did not join Government service, whereas his elder brother, Sheikh Abdul Rashid, was Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and a High Court Judge. He himself was acting President of the Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu and in 1931 when Sheikh Abdullah was arrested for the first time went to jail with him. It was on behalf of this Association that he used to distribute certificates in red to those adults who were given brutal floggings by the *Dogra* administration for making protests or speeches, as related by Khawaja Mohyuddin Hamdani Zohra in my interview with him, who was one of those who received a certificate.

He was the first Vice-President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference started in October, 1932 and was also a member

of the Kashmir Assembly. He always remained a close personal friend of Sheikh Abdullah's even though later on they developed political differences. He tried very hard to unite the Muslim and National Conferences later on but some reactionary elements on either side opposed the effort. However, in spite of their political differences they always retained their respect for one another and in 1947 when political troubles began in Jammu Sheikh Abdullah sent off Sheikh Abdul Hamid to Pakistan, for which his family had already left.

In 1964 when Sheikh Abdullah, after nearly eleven years in detention came to Pakistan for discussions on Kashmir his very first action was to try to contact his old friends and associates. He and Sheikh Abdul Hamid met in Muzaffarabad for a short time, but then the news came of the sudden death of Pandit Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah had to leave immediately for Delhi.

Later, in May, 1983, Sheikh Abdul Hamid died in Lahore of old age, leaving behind one son and six daughters. Thus the last person involved of the original eight who worked for the movement for the freedom of *Kashmiris* from the *Dogra raj* has gone. Now all of them have left this world.

MAULANA MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH QURESHI

When I interviewed Maulana Abdullah Qureshi, a well-known research scholar of Lahore who was born in the same year as Sheikh Abdullah, 1905, I found he was the first person I had met who said he had attended *Sheikh sahib's* marriage reception in 1933 in Gulmarg, Kashmir, along with Prof. Ilmuddin Salik. He told me that it was a very quiet marriage held in Nedous Hotel, Gulmarg, which belonged to the wife's father, who had adopted the name of Sheikh Ahmed Hussain when he embraced Islam. He sits each morning in the office of Majlis-i-Taraqi Adab, Lahore, where I met him in the spring of 1983, a quiet and unassuming man who has a number of books on Kashmir to his credit, dealing with its history and politics.

From 1924 onwards until 1945 Abdullah Qureshi used to go regularly to the Valley in the summer vacations with his two great friends, Prof. Ilmuddin Salik of Islamia College, Lahore (which Sheikh Abdullah had joined after completing his F.Sc. from Sri Partap College, Srinagar) and Munshi Muhammad Din Fouq (author of *"Mashakeer-i-Kashmir"*, 1930) both well-known scholars of Lahore. Fouq was a *Kashmiri* and a great friend of Allama Iqbal, also from a *Kashmiri* family, who devoted his life to working for the cause of his fellow *Kashmiris*.

Jagan Nath Azad says that in a letter to his brother, Sheikh Ata Muhammad, written in 1920 Iqbal reports that his family originally came from Chaku (Adwan). In his last book of essays, *"Hayat-e-Iqbal ki Gumshuda Karyan"* Abdullah Qureshi also reports that Iqbal's theory was that the *Kashmiris* were of Jewish stock. Because of his friendship for so many years with Prof. Ilmuddin Salik, Munshi Muhammad Din Fouq and *Maulana Qureshi* evinced a keen interest in Kashmir's history and politics.¹

As early as 1920 there was an All India Muslim Kashmir Conference outside Kashmir, expanded from the original Kashmir Muslim Anjuman of Lahore, founded in 1896 by Mian Karim Baksh, father of Mian Nizamuddin, the first meeting of which Allama Iqbal attended and of which he was the first secretary, even though he was still a student. Iqbal wrote a poem on that Anjuman, which was later published in Munshi Muhammad Din Fouq's *"Kashmiri Magazine"* and then in *"Baq Yad-i-Iqbal"*.

As *Maulana Qureshi* remembered, in 1921 Allama Iqbal paid his

first visit to the Valley in connection with a case in the High Court, Srinagar, mentioned by Sheikh Abdullah in the speech he made on August 21st, 1981 in Srinagar, when he handed over the Chairmanship of the National Conference to his eldest son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah. Seeing the indescribable poverty of the people of Kashmir for the first time he wrote his famous Persian verse (one of three verses which he wrote on Kashmir) and the English rendering of which I have interpreted as:

"The *Kashmiri* is imprisoned by bonds of servitude,

Chisels the gravestone for his own grave,

Is without inspiration or ideals,

Has no self respect,

His master wears silken robes through the labour of his slave,

Whose own body is clothed in tattered rags,

He sees no future for himself,

In his heart he nurses no ambition,

But the time will come when a spark will ignite within him

And he will burst forth into revolt."

Maulana Qureshi said that weeklies about the much needed uplift of *Kashmiris* under the *Dogra raj* were being published in Lahore from as early as 1909, of which hundreds of copies were smuggled into the State. By the time the leading Muslim newspapers had begun to take up the cause of Muslim Kashmir in the twenties — *"Muslim Outlook"*, *"Al Fazal"*, *"Al-Aman"*, *"Siasat"*, *"Inquilab"* and *"Zamindar"* of Lahore, he and his two friends had begun visiting Kashmir every summer, where the condition of the *Kashmiri* people caused them great anguish.

The three friends wanted to arouse the people, awaken them but the problem in the beginning was how to collect people in one place for in that period the press was not free, no gatherings or processions were permitted. It is true that by now the All India

Muslim Kashmir Conference had been started in 1920 by Syed Mohsin Shah, along with some other prominent leaders of *Kashmiri* families who had migrated last century and settled in the Punjab, he acting as the General Secretary for many years. The aim of this Conference was to work for the betterment of the lot of the *Kashmiris* but the centre of its influence was outside Kashmir. However, one of its objects, for which funds were collected, was the awarding of scholarships to *Kashmiri* students who could not bear their own expenses. Such funds were given to private educational bodies for distribution in the State to deserving students and Justice Nasim Shah, son of Syed Mohsin Shah, said in "*Muslim*" of Rawalpindi, 3-6-83, that one of the students who pursued his studies with the help of such scholarships was Sheikh Abdullah.

Maulana Qureshi described how one summer when the three friends were there in Kashmir it was the occasion of *Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi*, which *Kashmiris* celebrate with great fervour, so they seized the opportunity to collect together some likeminded people and took contributions from some Lahore friends to hold a *milad sharif* in the mosque of Maisoma Bazar, Amira Kadal. Various people made speeches, including Prof. Ilmuddin Salik, Chaudhry Barkat Ali. One person translated everything into *Kashmiri* so that the gathering could understand, then *halva*, *kulchas* and tea were served and people were happy.

The following summer these friends again went to Srinagar and held two or three more *milads* in mosques. Prof. Ilmuddin Salik used to make very meaningful speeches, exhorting people to wake up, lead honest lives and free themselves from the oppression of feudal landlords and this had a very good impact. Seeing this they managed to hold some public meetings. Until then there were no political parties in Kashmir and no-one was willing to come forward. Using the religious and cultural pattern of the *Kashmiris* they began to inspire them and teach them to want freedom. They exhorted them to become organised politically. This was all before Sheikh Abdullah and his group emerged on the scene. It was, so to say, the beginning.

It was because of Iqbal's emotional involvement in the movement for the uplift of the Muslims of Kashmir and because he had written special progressive poems to be recited at the meetings of the *Kashmiri Anjumans* which he attended that he made such a great impression on Sheikh Abdullah, from the first time of meeting him in Lahore in 1925, as a student.

Iqbal used to address the Annual Sessions of the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam and Sheikh Abdullah attended all the meetings as a student of Islamia College and used to meet Iqbal in Lahore at that time.

Iqbal supported the Kashmir movement not only politically but financially and morally. He wrote many letters to affluent people in India to help the cause of the *Kashmiris*. This is the only time in his life that he asked for money—for the *Kashmiri* cause. There are many letters in his books in which he has made this appeal. He arranged for advocates from the Punjab, Bihar and Patna to help to conduct the cases of the political prisoners in the Kashmir movement of 1931–33. One such was Naeem-ul-Haq, a lawyer of all India repute in Patna, who was appointed and sent by him to Kashmir to help the political cases in 1932.

Below is given an idea of the impression which Iqbal's poetry had on Sheikh Abdullah. He wrote from Jammu on 14-3-81 in a personal letter to Khawaja Ghulam Din Wani, a prominent *Kashmiri* leader before 1947, who became a Minister in Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government, regarding the poetry of Allama Iqbal. The English translation reads:

"He depicts a changing world. I am very much attached to him spiritually and he impresses me very much because as a poet of the East all his predictions have proved correct. I think Iqbal's poetry helps everybody to understand life. Everyone should read Iqbal for the betterment of mankind."

Maulana Qureshi said that Sheikh Abdullah used to take *Salik sahib* along with him to meetings in the rural areas of the Valley in the summer vacations, where *Salik sahib* would speak in Urdu, the speech having first been written by *Maulana Qureshi* and *Sheikh sahib* would translate into *Kashmiri*. In this way he learnt to speak very well and it would not be wrong to say that it was *Salik sahib*, who was a Professor in Urdu and Persian in Islamia College, Lahore, who helped to bring him out and taught him how to make meaningful speeches, especially to rural audiences. In fact he was one of those who shaped Sheikh Abdullah, just as Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah projected him before the people as a leader after seeing his potentialities. *Maulana Qureshi* continued:

"It was in 1927 that Dr. Iqbal decided to contest Assembly

Elections for the Punjab Council. I and my group were canvassing for him and Dr. Taseer was in charge of publicity and also in charge of the office. He introduced me to Dr. Iqbal as "one of your silent workers". Dr. Iqbal replied that all workers should work silently! He was elected for a period of three years, then he left this office because of his many other preoccupations. Whenever there was a meeting of one of the *Anjumans* concerning Kashmir in which Dr. Iqbal was to be present I used to attend.

"In 1931 there were Hindu, Muslim and police clashes in Jammu and Srinagar and the sleeping nation awoke, young men rushed forward and a popular revolt began, during which thousands were arrested. Prominent among them were Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad in Srinagar and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas in Jammu.

"Iqbal himself came from a *Kashmiri Brahmin* family. He used to study the conditions of Kashmir very carefully and was much concerned when the 1931 riots began. He said:

"Whatever is happening is not unexpected. It is quite possible that a bigger revolution will take place, then what happens?"

"Muslims of the Punjab felt very concerned at the helplessness of *Kashmiri* Muslims. Therefore, on one side the *Ahrars* demonstrated against the cruelties perpetrated upon *Kashmiris* and they sent thousands of volunteers from the Punjab to fill up the jails of Kashmir. They collected in Sialkot and relatives of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, editor of "*Zamindar*" living there, used to arrange for cooked meals for these volunteers. The initiative in sending them was taken by Aṭaullah Shah Bukhari and Sheikh Hissamuddin, leaders of the *Ahrar* movement from Amritsar.

"On the other side the Kashmir Committee started a constitutional and non-violent movement and they tried to make an effort to obtain rights for the *Kashmiris* through constitutional efforts. The All India Kashmir Committee was formed in 1931 on the initiative of Dr. Iqbal, who was its Secretary General. It was at his instance that Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmed took up the Chairmanship of the Committee and organised the work from Qadian.

"In Lahore Dr. Taseer, Maulana Ilmuddin Salik and I used to help Dr. Iqbal in this work. We all used to meet in the old Lorang's Restaurant on the Mall for discussions. Dr. Taseer has written:

"There were two committees operating in Lahore on a local level for the All India Kashmir Committee from 1931—"The 56 Movement" and the "Ghazi Ilam Din Committee." Iqbal was heading these two committees and I was in both and used to write the Minutes of the Meetings."²

"In this connection Dr. Iqbal sent some really eminent lawyers by persuasion to Kashmir for this legal work—Maulvi Naeem ul Haq was one. Some went from Lahore and followed up the cases but the Kashmir Government asked these Muslim lawyers to leave the State and actually stopped many of them from entering so that the Muslims in Kashmir were deprived of legal help.

"There were many important members from all over India associated with this Committee. It performed very useful work for the three or four years that it operated. "Kashmir Day" was observed for those who had died or been injured in the July, 1931 Firings. Thousands of public meetings were organised all over India to support the demands of the *Kashmiris* for the introduction of reforms. Arrangements were made for publication of Kashmir news in British newspapers, lawyers from all over India were brought to Kashmir to work for the defence of hundreds of Muslims who were being tried on charges of murder, arson and rioting, etc. Funds were collected from all over India for this work and the Committee worked in collaboration with Sheikh Abdullah and his Muslim Conference workers. A number of *Ahmedis* and also *Ahrars* were associated with the All India Kashmir Committee, which was actually organised by the *Jamaat-i-Ahmedia*. After some time Mirza Bashiruddin opted out of the Committee and first Mian Amiruddin and then Dr. Iqbal became its Chairman. Iqbal used the *Ahmedis* in Kashmir, for this urgent work as did Sheikh Abdullah, but when he saw that they were becoming too powerful and there was prejudice against them then Mirza Bashiruddin was asked to resign as President of the Committee. After about three years it was disbanded."

The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was formed in 1932 after discussions between Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi and Sheikh Abdullah before their release from jail on June 4th. *Maulana Qureshi* said that the first presidential address at the Inaugural session of the Muslim Conference held on 14th, 15th and 16th October in Srinagar was drafted by Prof. Ilmuddin Salik. Sheikh Abdullah said in his presidential address:

'We are extremely grateful to the Muslims of India in general and those of the Punjab in particular for their unparalleled sacrifices and total sympathy to the cause of our trials and tribulations. We are also thankful to the Muslim press of the subcontinent for having so effectively represented our case.'³

Maulana Qureshi continued:

"Sometimes Sheikh Abdullah, accompanied by Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad (leader of the *Tonga Drivers' Association* and the *Boatmen's Association*) used to visit us three friends in Taj Mahal Hotel, Srinagar, where we used to stay in the summer, to discuss and get new inspiration for their planning from *Salik sahib*, who was closest to Sheikh Abdullah. All this happened in the summer vacations when we used to come to Kashmir from Lahore.

"However, in 1938 when the Muslim Conference was renamed the National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah came under its influence *Salik sahib* stepped aside, because of a difference on a vital issue, i.e. he believed in the ideology of the Muslim Conference.

"Up to 1945 I too went every summer to Kashmir then I stopped because my sympathies also were with the Muslim Conference."

Maulana Qureshi finished with an amusing incident of those days which revealed the strong personality of Sheikh Abdullah on certain issues:

"In the years 1945-46 the American army personnel posted in Delhi, Lahore, etc., were gradually being drafted back home. Numbers of them first went to Kashmir for a holiday. In places like Naseem Bagh, Hazrat Bal they started "Eve Teasing" —

school and college girls, boat women, even English women, who used to run into the shops on the Bund for protection! Sheikh Abdullah made it his mission at that time to catch hold of each pair of offenders and knock their heads together! None of them could prevail against a person of that size! They were a nuisance to this extent that the then Prime Minister, Mr. Gopal-swami Ayyanger, banned their entry to the city, Naseem Bagh and Hazrat Bal.

"Sheikh Abdullah was a courageous and strong man, a born fighter. He was also stubborn and very outspoken—'*ziddi bahut tha!*' He often suffered because of this but he never budged from a stand once taken. In the early years of their awakening people admired him immensely and were willing to give their lives for him and in fact did. They respected him even more than their *Pirs*. But towards the end they began to be critical of him because they thought he did not plan well ahead."

Which only goes to show that being a great and successful leader and an efficient administrator do not necessarily go together!

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PROF. ILMUDDIN SALIK
BY HIS SON MR. EHSAN ILAHI

Maulana Abdullah Qureshi had talked a great deal about the part Prof. Ilmuddin Salik had played in influencing and grooming Sheikh Abdullah for the role he was to play as a leader of his people after he had completed his studies, so that I considered myself fortunate in being able to meet one of his five sons, Mr. Ehsan Elahi Salik, also an educationist. Prof. Ilmuddin Salik and my husband had an old relationship—they had been at school and college together, a relationship which meant something in those days.

Prof. Salik was born in a suburb of Lahore and received his education at Dyal Singh College, Forman Christian College (as did my husband) and Aligarh University. He was always a teacher and research scholar and had a number of books, short stories and many articles to his credit. As a man he was quiet and unassuming, but tenacious and did not like receiving praise and he always had a passionate belief in the cause of the *Kashmiris* and tried his utmost right up to his death to reconcile differences between Kashmir and Pakistan. He died in 1973.

Mr. Ehsan Elahi said that my husband joined Islamia College as a lecturer in 1926 where Prof. Ilmuddin Salik was already teaching and where Sheikh Abdullah had joined as a science student in 1925. From the beginning these two developed that ideal relationship—the affection of the teacher for his student and the love of the student for his teacher who, Sheikh Abdullah himself always emphasised had shaped and strengthened his character and ideology. It was Prof. *Salik* who advised him to continue his education in Aligarh University where he would receive the same atmosphere as in Islamia College, Lahore.

Sheikh Abdullah never forgot friends and influences and years later, in 1964, when he came to Pakistan after having been released from nearly eleven years of detention, as he came down from the plane at Rawalpindi he eagerly began asking for his friends of previous years, one of the first being his old teacher, for whom he emphasised:

“I have always had the greatest respect and affection, for he influenced me in my early years and I want to meet him again. Where is he? I must meet him again.”

It is strange that because of this remark expressed in all good faith by *Sheikh sahib* Prof. *Salik* became “marked” by the C.I.D. and when he applied to be allowed to go on *Haj* in 1965 (the year that Sheikh Abdullah also went) his passport was withheld for one year and he was finally given permission to go in 1966! And so it was a tragic fate that he and his old teacher did not ever meet again, even on the occasion of the *Haj* of 1965.

Mr. Elahi continued that while *Sheikh sahib* was a student in Lahore and Aligarh he used to go home for the summer vacations to the Valley, i.e. from 1926 onwards. From 1927 Prof. Ilmuddin Salik also used to go for the summer with his two great friends, Maulana Abdullah Qureshi and Munshi Muhammad Din Fouq (a great friend of Allama Iqbal). He added that whenever Allama Iqbal used to issue a statement on Kashmir he always used to consult Prof. *Salik* before composing it. All these three friends were great admirers of Allama Iqbal and worked with him in the Kashmir cause.

Mr. Ehsan Elahi first saw Sheikh Abdullah in the summer vacations of 1943 when he was a 10th class student and had gone to Kashmir with his father. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq were also there and his father used to try to clear up misunderstandings between them all, for by this time Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was with the Muslim Conference, which was restarted in 1942.

Mr. Elahi said his father tried more than once without success to reconcile the differences between Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah and Sheikh Abdullah. Both were strong characters—both had their followings—Mirwaiz the powerful moneyed business community and the religious community, Sheikh Abdullah a newcomer but with the much larger audience—the common man.

Each summer when Prof. *Salik* visited Kashmir in the vacations he used to go with Sheikh Abdullah right into the rural areas all over the Valley, travelling on foot or by pony. *Salik* did not himself join in politics but he was always there to advise and help, he helped Sheikh Abdullah to prepare his speeches. In the villages people were desperately poor but they showed the greatest love and reverence for *Sheikh sahib*.

The awakening for political change that Sheikh Abdullah started in the State in the early thirties began in the urban areas but

when he started to go to the rural areas from 1933 onwards as Sher-i-Kashmir he received a tumultuous welcome because he had already been visiting remote villages in various areas from 1926 onwards in the summers with Prof. Ilmuddin Salik.

Mr. Elahi added:

"My father used to say that in those years *Sheikh sahib* ate very simple food—the typical food of the poorer *Kashmiris*."

But how he changed in his food habits in later years!

Right up to 1947 each winter Sheikh Abdullah used to come to the plains and to Lahore especially, where he always visited his old teacher. Mr. Elahi added:

"Whenever I saw him I was always impressed by the great affection he showed for my father and I was conscious that he had only one passion—"Kashmir and the *Kashmiris*."

"After 1947 my father was always very much concerned about the future of Kashmir. In November, 1947 he wrote a very detailed letter to Quaid-i-Azam on the importance of Kashmir's relationship with Pakistan, in 1950 he met Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan for the same purpose. Then in 1952 Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin himself called my father to discuss the Kashmir problem. Mr. I. I. Chundrigar also used to call him for this purpose."

Mr. Ehsan Elahi's final summing up was:

"More than anything I felt that Sheikh Abdullah was a great humanitarian."

It is of interest to note that Maulana Ilmuddin Salik was the teacher of yet another *Kashmiri* political leader who, as he himself says:

"Leapt into international fame in 1948 at United Nations in the Lake Success Session on Kashmir without having had to toil and sacrifice for years."

This was Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, President of Azad Kashmir, from October 24th, 1947 who studied in Islamia College, Lahore from 1933–37.

MR. KALIM AKHTAR

After my return to Lahore I met Mr. Kalim Akhtar, Regional Manager of the National Press Trust, Lahore, who was born in 13-4-32 and whose elder brother had been my husband's student in Islamia College, Lahore after Partition, to ask him for his memories and researches on Sheikh Abdullah, whom he had first seen at the age of ten. He told me he was the son of Mian Ghulam Ali, Superintendent Revenue Department, Jammu and Kashmir Government, one of the founders of the Young Men's Muslim Association at Jammu and throughout his life, like all other educated *Kashmiris* involved in every movement for social, educational and political reforms.

Mr. Kalim Akhtar had his schooling in Sri Partap High School, Srinagar up to 1948 and was a class-fellow of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Aslam Khan, Kabir Bedi, etc. In the winters he studied in S. Hari Singh High School Jammu. The rest of his education was received in Lahore after migration in 1948—M.A. (History), M.A. (Political Science) from Punjab University. Mr. Kalim Akhtar is a well-known writer and journalist and a researcher on Kashmir Affairs, author of a Biography of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah up to 1964. At present he is working with the National Press Trust, Lahore. He is personally known to Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mr. K. H. Khurshid, Sardar Ibrahim Khan and others of the Kashmir movement. Mr. Kalim Akhtar said:

"Because of my father's involvement that is how I came to know about Sheikh Abdullah, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah, A. R. Saghar, Chaudhry Hamid-ullah and all others of the oncoming Kashmir leaders of that time. One of my cousins, Muhammad Hussain was Commander, Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference *Razakars* and when the Muslim Conference started my cousin associated with Sheikh Abdullah's party. I first saw *Sheikh sahib* in 1942 in Jammu, when he came to see Lala Gardari Lal Annand Sharaf, who was at that time editor of the weekly, "*Annand*" and Mr. A. R. Saghar who was associate editor of that weekly magazine. The house of Mr. G. L. Annand was just opposite to our house in Jammu and the dinner which was arranged for *Sheikh sahib* by him took place in our house, where there was more space. I was at that time ten years' old. In the same year I saw him in Srinagar addressing a public meeting at Partap Park, as our Srinagar house was near the park, at Badshah Chowk. My

impression was that all the people—men, women and children—listened to his speech very intently and that all the crowd loved him, all wanted to touch him, to hold his hands, he was like a *Pir* to them. In those days he still had a small beard. In this speech first he recited from the Holy *Koran* in his melodious voice, then a verse from Iqbal which I still remember—“*Ya rub dil-e-Muslim ko woh zinda tumana de*”. Since the *Kashmiri* Muslims are basically a religious people he touched them with this kind of approach. When I heard him he spoke in Urdu and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad translated into *Kashmiri*. It was summer and the *Maharaja's Durbar* was in Srinagar. Many foreigners and visitors were also present in that first meeting.

“In 1944 just before the visit of Quaid-i-Azam to Jammu I saw *Sheikh sahib* in Taj Hotel, Jammu along with my father, Abdul Majid Qarshi, editor of “*Jamhur*” and Sheikh Ghulam Qadir, a well-known Freedom Fighter. *Sheikh sahib* was on his way to Srinagar and had just arrived from Lahore. After the departure of *Sheikh sahib* to Srinagar these three persons had a meeting with Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, but I do not know the context of the meeting. Quaid-i-Azam was given a grand reception by the Jammu people and addressed a meeting in the evening. The reception was arranged by Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas on behalf of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference.

“In the first week of May, 1946 our family shifted from Jammu to Srinagar. We were a business family and had shops, etc., in both cities, so we used to spend six months in each. In 1946 when we arrived in Srinagar we saw everywhere posters “*Kashmir ko Chordo*” (“Quit Kashmir”). By that time the Quit Kashmir movement was launched and I heard the speech of *Sheikh sahib*, which was arranged near the Lal Chowk. Again he spoke in Urdu, which was translated into *Kashmiri* by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and I still remember his one sentence:

‘*Loonga Ghulab Singh se Shermnalla Gardari Badla Loonga*’.

‘I will take revenge from Ghulab Singh for his treachery’ and after some days we learnt that *Sheikh sahib* had been arrested. During all this period I saw the devotion and love for *Sheikh sahib* on the part of the citizens of Srinagar and how they joined his movement, “Quit Kashmir”.

“In the telegram which he sent to the British Government Cabinet Mission at that time (April, 1946) he says that the agreement between the British and the *Dogras* will be finished with the going of the British so the administration should be given into the hands of the *Kashmiri* people.

“My impression about Sheikh Abdullah is that he was not only a political leader but a social reformer too. Once I saw him in our *mohalla* when he visited his office of the *Halqa* Committee, National Conference and I still remember he was talking to Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Gilkar and Mr. Ali Muhammad who was at that time Secretary of the *Tonga Drivers' Association*, the backbone of *Sheikh sahib's* movement. In 1953 all these workers protested against India. They were willing to sacrifice their lives for him and many of them were killed in the firing which took place in this movement. This is not merely a political love.

“Again I saw him at the end of September after he had been released from jail and there was a grand reception and public meeting arranged in Hazuri Bagh. This meeting was arranged by the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. All were waiting for *Sheikh sahib's* decision about joining Pakistan or India, but in that meeting he kept quiet.”

Mr. B. L. Kak says in his book:

“On 3rd October, 1947 in a meeting in Srinagar Sheikh Abdullah said:

“Our choice for joining the Indian Union or Pakistan would be based on the welfare of forty lakhs people living in Jammu and Kashmir. We will never believe in the two-nation theory. We want people's *raj* in Kashmir. We want to establish such a government here as would ensure all opportunity to everybody without any prejudice to his class or religion.”¹

This was one day after my husband had come from Lahore to meet him. Kalim Akhtar continued:

“At the end of the last week of October, 1947 he addressed a large public meeting in Chowk Badshah in Urdu, again translated into *Kashmiri* by Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad. The meeting

was arranged just opposite the shops of my uncle, Mian Shahab-uddin and we listened to his speech. Sheikh Abdullah was standing on a bus and he was strongly opposing the going away of refugees to Pakistan. He delivered this speech after his arrival from Delhi and the next day, 30th October we learnt that he had been appointed Chief Emergency Administrator and he took charge."

Mr. Satish Vashishta in his book says:

"Pandit Nehru wanted to appease him (Sheikh Abdullah) by putting him in power so that India could be sure of his followers' support for the Accession of the State to India.

"Compelled by circumstances the *Maharaja* yielded under the pressure of Pandit Nehru and decided to pass on some authority to Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah was sworn in as Chief Emergency Administrator on October 30th, 1947. But he was not sure where he stood. Mentally he was torn by the situation. He was only the head of an emergency administration while the *Maharaja's* authority to rule the State was intact."²

At the swearing-in ceremony when Sheikh Abdullah took over as the first popular Prime Minister of the State he had to declare:

'I, Sheikh Abdullah, son of Muhammad Ibrahim, who has been appointed as an Administrator, solemnly promise that I shall remain loyal to His Highness, Maharaja Hari Singh Ji Bahadur, the Ruler of Jammu and Kashmir and his heirs and successors and shall honestly discharge the duties that are to be entrusted to me.'

All this after his elaborate "Quit Kashmir" campaign in which so many of his Freedom Fighters worked underground for months to carry on the struggle while he and some other members of his National Conference, which was now banned, were in jail!

However, he now consistently worked for communal harmony. At the swearing-in ceremony he said:

'We shall reckon communalism and its propagation as a serious offence. We will not tolerate an outlook which makes distinction between one community and another.'

Kalim Akhtar continued:

"I remained in Srinagar up to the end of October, 1948 when I left with the convoy which Sheikh Abdullah *sahib* saw off and addressed from the Srinagar Police Lines and he said:

'Do not go, I need all of you in the Jammu and Kashmir State'. This was when he had become Head of the Emergency Administration and the people who were leaving in the convoy were mostly those from Jammu, including some of the high officials of Jammu and Kashmir. When he took over I saw him so many times in Srinagar before I left addressing public meetings and doing welfare work for the people. All the meetings were in Urdu. But when he went to the rural areas he spoke in *Kashmiri*."

Kalim Akhtar continued:

"I also saw *Sheikh sahib* in 1948 when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came to Srinagar. In those days the Kashmir war was on and the Indian Army was in great difficulties. We knew this through our own sources, as my uncle was a military contractor. In a meeting which was arranged in Lal Chowk, Pandit Nehru shook hands with *Sheikh sahib*, who was wearing an *achkan* and Jinnah cap. I still remember that a well-known artist, M. Dhar, painted two portraits, one of Gandhiji and the other of *Sheikh sahib* riding on a horse, with the National Conference Flag in his hand. Pandit Nehru and *Sheikh sahib* both spoke in Urdu.

"When I came to Pakistan I compared the leadership of this side with *Sheikh sahib's* because I was in a position to analyse the true picture, so I wrote a book in the light of the Kashmir struggle for freedom. This book was appreciated by most and criticised by some."³

"In May, 1964 when Sheikh Abdullah came to Pakistan after his release from nearly eleven years of detention I saw him in West Pakistan House, Rawalpindi. Pir Maqbool Jilani introduced me to *Sheikh sahib* and he embraced me and enquired about my father and also a friend of his.

"*Sheikh sahib* delivered a speech at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi on May 25th before a huge audience of more than two lakhs of people, including thousands of women. He began by saying:

'It is a pity that I have to address you from a distance' (he was enclosed in a rostrum on a platform) 'but perhaps you have a tradition of seeing speakers thus here.'

"First he recited in his melodious voice from the Holy *Koran*, then he quoted a verse from Iqbal. Then he related the Kashmir problem as it was at that time and emphasized the importance of its solution for the peace of the subcontinent and for the whole of Asia He said:

'I will try my utmost for a meeting between Ayub Khan and Jawaharlal Nehru.'

"While he was speaking came the time for prayers. He stopped speaking, observed *namaz*, and then resumed his speech. Everyone listened in pindrop silence. In that meeting the most important thing was that Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan, present in the meeting, said that Sheikh Abdullah was not only the leader of Kashmir but a leader of the Muslim world. I was told in Rawalpindi that both *Kashmiri* leaders, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and Sheikh Abdullah met and resolved their personal differences during this visit. Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah from Rawalpindi was also present in the meeting.

"After the sudden death of Pandit Nehru, *Sheikh sahib* left for Delhi for the funeral, but Dr. Farooq Abdullah and *Sheikh sahib's* nephew, Sheikh Rashid, who had accompanied him remained in Lahore for a while in Faletti's Hotel and we used to meet daily, for I had known Dr. Farooq since our school days.

"When *Sheikh sahib* was re-arrested in 1965 after his visit abroad I wrote him a letter and received the reply from Kodai Kanal Jail, Madras and up to the time of his death I received more than six letters and the last was just before his death on September 8th, 1982, thanking me for the "get well" letter which I had sent to him with Begum Taseer when she went to Srinagar at the end of June. *Sheikh sahib* wrote to me:

'Please give me your visa application number and I will try my best for you to visit Kashmir.'

"As a man *Sheikh sahib* was very warm and human in his behaviour with people and I think the inspiration of his leader-

ship will encourage young people and also shape them so that they will be prepared to face the problems of the future.

"Mr. Yusuf Taing, Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, told me when he recently came to Pakistan that during *Sheikh sahib's* last days he used to call him and ask him to read to him from my book written on him up to 1964, as by then he was too weak to read himself."

Mr. Kalim Akhtar has related in his abovementioned biography that in March, 1940 when the historic meeting of the All India Muslim League was held in Lahore in which the Pakistan Resolution was passed, both Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and Sheikh Abdullah attended and the former is reported to have said:

'This is the last nail in the coffin of British Imperialism.' At that time both were still in the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was re-started in 1942 and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas joined it.

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MIAN MUMTAZ MUHAMMAD KHAN DAULTANA

Because of Mian Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana's reported participation in the discussions on behalf of the Muslim League at this very critical period, i.e. 1945-47, I met him in Lahore in January, 1984 to record his impressions of Sheikh Abdullah in the important events which were then taking place, i.e. 1947. *Mian Daultana*, aged 66, is one of Pakistan's most controversial politicians. He belongs to one of the biggest land-owning families of the Punjab (second among the top fourteen of the province). His father, Khan Ahmad Yar Khan, was awarded the title "*Khan Bahadur*" in recognition of the family's service to the Empire.

In the crucial period between the Quaid's death and Ayub Khan's Martial Law, when the changes in the central and provincial governments led to the death of democracy and the beginning of martial law, *Mian Daultana* was one of the most important and influential feudal bureaucrat-politicians.

He joined the Muslim League at the end of 1942-43 and was Secretary of the Punjab branch. His opinion was that the Punjab was unprepared for the role it would have to play if Pakistan came into being. He told me:

"My father was a very intimate friend of Sheikh Abdullah's father-in-law, Sheikh Ahmed Hussain and the latter was very kind to me after the death of my father in 1940. Because of this I had entry into the family and when I went to Srinagar I stayed in Nedous Hotel. I was married in 1943 and spent my honeymoon in Kashmir and this was the first time I met *Sheikh sahib*. I again met him in 1944, 1945 and 1946. He was a man of great charm and with integrity, honesty and absolute convictions that amounted to a sort of spiritual faith. At that time I was working with *Jinnah* and of that time we often spoke. He knew I was a very committed Muslim Leaguer and he never questioned my values.

He said:

'What are you doing is right from your point of view, but will not lead to the freedom we want. The freedom which we want is for the whole of India. Freedom is only given with the united India freedom, without any division between them.'

All his talk was of the *Dogra* regime, of the repression of the *Dogras* against Muslims. He said:

'Freedom from the *Dogras* is impossible without freedom from the British.'

"My impression was that his first determination was the thought of making his people free, first from the rule of the *Dogras* and then the British. My impression also is that he was devoted to the spiritual history of Islam. At that time I did not feel so strongly about these matters but he was very much so. What happened was that Sheikh Abdullah perfectly understood a free Muslim state that would have meant a free Kashmir. Unfortunately circumstances did not allow that relationship to develop with Mr. Jinnah, both of them very firm in their convictions. At that stage because of the division amongst Muslims, *Jinnah* had to give the impression that we are a separate nation and we are represented by a distinct organisation which is a national movement. His opinion was that if you are not in this movement you are not a believer in a separate nationality. The Quaid would have been ready for a separate co-existence in the subcontinent but since his own community was in such a shattered state he had always to over-emphasise. While the Congress was very articulate *Jinnah* was alone. The only people to work with him were the young ones. There was no one he could depend on.

"In talk about the larger human values Sheikh Abdullah was a delightful companion. My conviction is that he was as devout a Muslim as he was a Freedom Fighter. He was one of the prime figures in the movement, he was a greater man than Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. With Nehru how he fought!

'I want freedom for the *Kashmiris*, who are Muslims'.

"In Murree I met him for a few minutes when he was on his way to Azad Kashmir in May, 1964. As he passed by the Mall with his entourage he saw me. We had last met in 1946—this was now 1965, but he recognised me and stopped his car and we had about ten minutes' talk. He said:

'It is a great happiness that you are now thinking in terms which make sense and you find that there is some point in

what your apprehensions were and that now there should be some arrangement between the *Kashmiris* and Pakistan. The Indian presence will remain but you can break away from the spirit of the present time.'

"There was no sort of repression, it was so easy to speak to him. There were no reserves between us.

"I was also a great friend of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. I always retained my deep respect and affection for him. These two were political adversaries but respected one another and when they met in 1964, after a gap of 16 years it was with great emotion. These two fought all their lives but Ghulam Abbas had a very soft corner for Sheikh Abdullah. Whenever he spoke of him he spoke with regret but without rancour and with affection. Ghulam Abbas was a man of great nobility and was very conscious of Sheikh Abdullah's humanity."

BEGUM ISMAT IFTIKHARUDDIN

Each time I met *Sheikh sahib* he would enquire about the welfare of a special old friend, Begum Ismat Iftikharuddin, widow of the late Mian Iftikharuddin, a dedicated politician first in Indian National Congress, which he joined in 1936 after his return from Oxford and then Muslim League in 1945, and from October, 1947 West Pakistan Minister for Refugees for a short while. He was also the founder in early 1947 of Progressive Papers Ltd., which printed "*Imroz*" and "*Pakistan Times*", of which Faiz Ahmed Faiz was the first chief editor. Both were working for the Pakistan movement from 1945.

Begum Iftikharuddin had known Sheikh Abdullah first as a small girl in Aligarh when her father, Prof. Muhammad Sharif was Professor of Philosophy in Aligarh University and *Sheikh sahib* was an M.Sc. student who was very close to him. He was already Vice-President of the Aligarh Students' Union at that time.

By 1981 *Sheikh sahib's* health had begun to flag and he was feeling nostalgic about his old friends. He had invited Faiz Ahmed Faiz to come to Kashmir. He had written to Mian Amiruddin at Lahore to come to Kashmir and bring Munira, Allama Iqbal's daughter, married to Amiruddin's son and had also written to Begum Iftikharuddin. She had really made up her mind to accept his invitation as she told me, but finally could not go because of visa delays. And then of course it became too late.

Here is the last letter which *Sheikh sahib* wrote to Begum Iftikharuddin from Srinagar, of which she later gave me a copy when I met her the following winter, i.e. 1982:

'June 30, 1981

My dear Ismat,

I have received your two letters both dated June 18, 1981 which were personally delivered to me by Mr. Shahnawaz' 'At the outset I wish to assure you that you have never been out of my mind. I have been making enquiries about you every now and then from our mutual friends who come here from time to time from Pakistan. We spent some time together with your friends and found them very charming and enjoyed their

company every bit. Please convey my greetings and best wishes to all friends.

With warm regards'

Begum Iftikharuddin told me:

"*Sheikh sahib* couldn't have kept out of politics, couldn't have helped being in politics—it was his life. I cannot think of him except as being in politics right from the beginning and as part of the national freedom struggle. This meant freedom from the British *raj* and for the *Kashmiris* also freedom from the *Dogra raj*. One great quality was his resilience. He had many setbacks in his political career, but he had this tremendous capacity to come back and keep coming back. He was a born fighter. Throughout the years we all used to meet whenever we happened to be in the same place and when the idea of Pakistan became a reality my husband told the Muslim Leaguers that if you want that Kashmir should join Pakistan then you must make it a truly democratic country.

"In the summers, I, my husband, mother-in-law and the children used to go to Kashmir and used to meet *Sheikh sahib* there. Then my husband was jailed for two years under the British *raj* along with other Congress workers in the "Quit India" movement and they were released in July, 1945. Soon after Sheikh Abdullah was also involved in his "Quit Kashmir" movement, fighting for the improvement of the conditions of his people and for their freedom from the *Dogra raj*. Fighting for freedom was the same, wherever it was, "Quit India" or "Quit Kashmir", so they were one."

Begum Iftikharuddin told me about how her husband had quietly brought Sheikh Abdullah to Lahore in early October, 1947. She said:

"This room in which we are sitting and which I have made into a small drawing room was a bedroom in 1947 and is the very room in which Sheikh Abdullah slept for two nights while my husband tried to persuade Quaid-i-Azam then in Karachi, on the 'phone, to meet him."

Mian Iftikharuddin, at one time a member of the Indian

National Congress Working Committee and having been jailed for two years in the "Quit India" movement, but now a Muslim Leaguer, left Lahore by car at the beginning of October, having also paid an earlier visit in August-September, with Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz, to meet National Conference and Muslim Conference leaders. He had a special relationship with Sheikh Abdullah and was able to persuade him to accompany him to Lahore in the first week of October. When they arrived he was lodged in Mian Iftikharuddin's house for two nights. The latter rang up Quaid-i-Azam to persuade him to meet Sheikh Abdullah, who was willing, but he refused. Mian Iftikharuddin was very upset and told his wife, 'Kashmir is lost to us. It was very necessary that Kashmir should have been with us.' Sheikh Abdullah quite naturally felt rebuffed. As he told his old friend:

'I came here at your persuasion. True, you are all *Pakistanis*, but I am also a *Kashmiri*.'

Mian Iftikharuddin's driver, Khizar, now a middle-aged man, but still active, drove Sheikh Abdullah back at 4 a.m. the next morning, reaching Srinagar at 10 p.m. Begum Iftikharuddin continued:

"My husband was very upset at his failure to convince Quaid-i-Azam. He even made a special air trip to Karachi to see him to try to get him to change his mind, but Quaid-i-Azam got all excited and replied:

'I don't need to meet this man. Kashmir is in my pocket,' a famous remark attributed to him because most *Pakistanis* at that time assumed that Kashmir would be joining Pakistan.

Begum Iftikharuddin now sent her secretary to the house of her old driver, Khizar, for the copy of his photograph which I had requested and then gave me directions as to how to reach his house in Masson Road. A few days later I found my way there and interviewed him and found that he already knew me because of our earlier association with the family. He gave me a vivid description of the two journeys.

Before my leaving Begum Iftikharuddin she remembered that probably the now defunct "*Civil & Military Gazette*" of Lahore had reported this visit of *Sheikh sahib's* to Lahore (I found "*Pakistan Times*" had not) so I went to visit Mr. Nasir Sheikh, the original

owner of this once famous Lahore daily, to find out if files for his newspaper for the month of October, 1947 would be available. In the course of conversation he remembered that while he was travelling with Mian Iftikharuddin to Moscow in April, 1953 the latter had described to him how he had brought Sheikh Abdullah to Lahore in early October, 1947 in a last attempt to get the problem of Kashmir's joining Pakistan resolved.

Not long after this, quite by chance, I met a lawyer friend of Begum Iftikharuddin's late son, Suhail, Aamir Aziz Syed, who practised in Lahore High Court. He related to me that in 1964 soon after Sheikh Abdullah's visit to Pakistan he and Suhail Iftikharuddin went on a visit to Delhi, both then in their early twenties. Here Suhail took Aamir to visit Miss Miridullah Sarabhai, a celebrated Indian Congress member and family friend, whom he much admired and the two were invited to stay for lunch and meet Sheikh Abdullah, who was expected from Srinagar. Aamir related that while they were waiting they noticed a framed handwritten letter from Jawaharlal on the wall of Miridullah Sarabhai's living room stating the reasons why he could not marry her, something which she is said to have very much wanted!

Outside the house a crowd of *Kashmiri* students had collected to meet *Sheikh sahib* and acquaint him with their grievances as *Kashmiris* in Delhi, where they were not getting their due representation in education, etc., and they remarked to these two that even a Pakistan with a martial law regime (at that time Ayub Khan's) would probably be more advantageous to them than the conditions under which they were living in India as *Kashmiris*.

Then Sheikh Abdullah arrived and after listening to the students promised to help them with their problems (he himself had been out of touch with his people for nearly eleven years, while in jail). He talked to Suhail and Aamir for two and a half hours, after which they were completely convinced that his approach to the Kashmir problem as it was then was the correct one. So far they had never had an opportunity of hearing his point of view.

Aamer said that during the course of conversation Sheikh Abdullah also told the two young men that soon after his release from jail on September 29th, 1947, he had accompanied Mian Iftikharuddin to Lahore at his insistence, that *Mian sahib* had already contacted Quaid-i-Azam on the 'phone in Karachi, with a request

that he would meet Sheikh Abdullah if he brought him to Karachi. *Sheikh sahib* quoted Quaid-i-Azam's reply when he reached Lahore and was put in touch with him on the 'phone:

'Who is Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah? I am prepared to discuss Kashmir only with the *Maharaja* or a senior Government official from Kashmir.'

Up to that time Pakistan still had its standstill agreement with Jammu and Kashmir, so Quaid-i-Azam's reply as an administrator was correct, but not as a politician negotiating with the leader of millions of Kashmir masses, a point which Jawaharlal Nehru was astute enough to understand.

An old Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference member, now resident in Lahore, tried to insist to me that the reported time, i.e. first week of October, 1947, when Sheikh Abdullah himself said he had made a lightning trip to Lahore on the persuasion of Mian Iftikharuddin, could not have been correct, there was not time between his coming out of jail and his leaving for Delhi round about the 18th October, his time being so fully occupied with public meetings, and that he must have come to Lahore for the purpose of contacting Quaid-i-Azam early in 1946 before he was arrested in the Quit Kashmir movement. But as Syed Aamer pointed out, at this period Quaid-i-Azam was available in either Delhi or Bombay, so Sheikh Abdullah would not have needed to come to Lahore to meet him. And the attempt to arrange a meeting between the two in 1945 and 1946 in Delhi on three occasions had already been unsuccessfully attempted by Dr. M. D. Taseer and others.

Then I recalled that when I had met Mr. Habib Kaifi, one time Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, now of Pakistan Writers' Guild, Lahore, in the winter of 1982 in Lahore, I asked him because he had been in Srinagar until October, 1948 if he was aware of the fact that, after his release from jail on September 29th, 1947, Sheikh Abdullah had paid a lightning visit to Lahore accompanied by Mian Iftikharuddin in connection with discussing Kashmir's future.

I asked:

"Did people in Srinagar know about this?"

and he answered,

'Yes, we all knew.'

Begum Zafar Ali, an MLA of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in Sheikh Abdullah's Government of 1975-82, whom I met on 29-2-84 in Delhi also confirmed that it was correct that during the first week of October, 1947 *Sheikh sahib* did slip out of Srinagar with Mian Iftikharuddin and go to Lahore with the object of fixing up a meeting with Quaid-i-Azam in Karachi for discussions about Kashmir's future. This fact was known in Srinagar. But the plan failed.

At an even later date, in December, 1984, I met a Lahore resident, a *Kashmiri* who had been an old student of my husband's in the period 1932-33 at Islamia College, Lahore, before the latter went to Cambridge to read for a Ph.D. in English. This was Mr. Muhammad Ishaq, now Hon. Secretary, *Nashar-o-Talif*, Anjum-i-Hamayyat, Lahore. He continued to keep in touch with his old teacher after his return from Cambridge. Like all *Kashmiris* out of their ancestral land he used to regularly meet his *Kashmiri* friends and thus came to know that in October, 1947 through the initial efforts of Dr. Taseer Sheikh Abdullah came to Lahore, brought by Mian Iftikharuddin, in whose house he stayed, for a very brief visit in order to try to arrange a meeting with Quaid-i-Azam and patch up their differences. Unfortunately the desired meeting did not take place and Sheikh Abdullah returned to Srinagar.

So Begum Iftikharuddin's earlier story was confirmed by all these others.

This was Sheikh Abdullah's fourth rebuff from Muhammad Ali Jinnah, i.e. 1944, 1945, 1946 and now 1947. Balraj Puri comments regarding these rebuffs:

"The relations of the National Conference with the *Maharaja* reached the lowest level after Pandit Ram Chand Kak became the head of the government on 20th June, 1945, necessary to support the policy of autocratic rule over the disgruntled majority. At first this appointment of the first *Kashmiri* Prime Minister was hailed by the Conference. But soon he took a firm line. Reversing the earlier understanding he insisted that the popular ministers had no right to express their individual or party opinion and must defend the policies of the government.

"For the rupture in the relations of Abdullah and *Jinnah*, responsibility thus lies more with the latter, who was not satisfied with anything short of complete surrender on the part of anybody, particularly a Muslim, seeking political alliance with him. It was too tall a demand from the tallest leader of Kashmir, who was no less proud of his own personality as also that of Kashmir, both of which he had come to regard as synonymous.

"*Jinnah* had said in his address to the annual session of the Muslim Conference on 17 June, 1946 that:

"99 per cent of the Muslims in Kashmir, in May, 1944 who met me were of the opinion that the Muslim Conference alone was the representative organisation of the State Muslims."

Begum Iftikharuddin added:

"This conversation has brought back to me all the old memories of our friendship and political struggle along with Pandit Nehru and other Congress workers, for which my husband went to jail for two years under the British *raj* in the "Quit India" movement.

"My husband, being for years a member of the Indian Congress Working Committee had very intimate relations with Pandit Nehru, who always stayed in our house as our guest whenever he visited Lahore. In 1960 he visited Pakistan for talks with General Ayub Khan, in Murree. The moment he arrived he requested General Ayub Khan to be allowed to go to Lahore for condolences to me and to offer a prayer at the grave of his old friend, Mian Iftikharuddin. This was diplomatically now, not possible, so General Ayub Khan's Military Secretary telephoned me to come at once to meet Pandit Nehru in Murree, where I was also accommodated in Government House, along with him and General Ayub Khan. I had an affectionate meeting with this old time friend and co-worker of my husband's." Begum Iftikharuddin continued:

"After *Sheikh sahib* had been released from nearly eleven years detention in jail at the end of 1963 and was sent by the Indian Government in May, 1964 for discussions with General Ayub Khan and his government on the possible solution of the

Kashmir problem he telephoned me in Lahore on his arrival at Rawalpindi and said;

'I am coming soon to Lahore to meet you and please take me to the grave of your husband to offer "*fateha*".'

"But before this could happen suddenly Pandit Nehru died of heart failure on 27th May. As soon as the news reached Lahore I and my son, Arif, went by road to Rawalpindi, where we joined *Sheikh sahib*, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was at that time Foreign Minister and Mian Arshad Hussain, Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, in a special P.I.A. flight to Delhi, which left on the 28th, in order to attend the funeral ceremony of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. We did not even have passports with us but we were given special permission to go in the same plane as *Sheikh sahib* and Mr. Bhutto. I and *Sheikh sahib* were put in the same car for the funeral procession. He was such a wonderful person that he did not show any bitterness against his one time friend for such a long incarceration (nearly eleven years) but only grief at his sudden death. And it must have been a bitter blow to *Sheikh sahib* that first he was in jail when his great friend, Iftikharuddin died and that now he could not even offer "*fateha*" at his grave in Lahore."

And what greater tragedy could there be in the life of a political leader who emerged from a long period of incarceration because of his beliefs and refusal to compromise, was sent to Pakistan by the Indian Government for discussions and had already had three satisfactory preliminary talks with the Pakistan President, which seemed to promise a glimmer of light on the Kashmir problem as it then was, than to find all his hopes of a satisfactory solution dashed to the ground by the untimely death of Pandit Nehru?

THE DRIVER'S STORY

"I am known as Khizar and my family originally came from Lucknow. I worked for Mian Iftikharuddin for thirty years and I had the honour of driving many important people during that time. I have driven Pandit Nehru, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and even Quaid-i-Azam.

"It must have been just after Dr. Taseer, whom I already knew as a friend of the family, and his companion went to Srinagar from Lahore in the first week of October, 1947 to meet Sheikh Abdullah, who had just been released from jail, that I drove my master, Mian Iftikharuddin to Srinagar in his own car. We left early in the morning and reached Srinagar the same evening and went to Sheikh Abdullah's house in Saura. Mian Iftikharuddin went inside and stayed for about two hours. I sat in the car and tea was sent out to me. Then Mian Iftikharuddin came out accompanied by Sheikh Abdullah. They were talking in English. Then we two drove to Nedous Hotel for the night. At that time it was the only good hotel in Srinagar.

"Early the next morning Sheikh Abdullah himself came to the hotel and we left for Lahore by car *via* the 'Pindi' route. I always kept 3-4 extra 4-gallon tins of petrol in my car for by that time Pakistan was not supplying petrol to Kashmir. So on the journey from Lahore I filled my tank and then refilled it at Rawalpindi. On the return journey Sheikh Abdullah got our tank refilled in Srinagar and then at Rawalpindi I did the same.

"We reached Lahore late at night, only stopping on the way for a meal and went to Mian Iftikharuddin's house in Aikman Road. Sheikh Abdullah slept for two nights in this house. On the third morning at 4 a.m. he and I left in the car for Srinagar. It was of course still dark at that time. I refilled with petrol at Rawalpindi and we reached Srinagar at 10 p.m. and *Sheikh sahib* arranged my hotel accommodation for the night. He also arranged for petrol for the car for my return journey to Rawalpindi the next morning. There I refilled my tank for the journey to Lahore."

Khizar, driver, now has a small house of his own and a small shop next door to it at the back of Masson Road, Lahore. He is still active and works as a driver for Mr. Salamatullah. I took a photograph of him for record.

BEGUM S. A. REHMAN AND MALKA PUKRAJ

An old friend, widow of a former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Justice S. A. Rahman, related to me in Lahore her memories of Sheikh Abdullah. I met her early in 1983 and she said:

"My grandfather was settled in Kashmir, a business man and my uncle, Sheikh Muhammad Amin, a government contractor, was a close friend of *Sheikh sahib's* as was his brother, Sheikh Muhammad Hanif, from the time he became a school teacher on his return from Aligarh University. My uncle, along with his family, attended *Sheikh sahib's* marriage reception in Gulmarg in the summer of 1933. I also attended with the rest of the family. At that time *Begumsahiba* was in *purdah*.

"When I first used to go to Kashmir for the summer in the early thirties the condition of the people was very miserable. So many of them suffered from scabies and other skin diseases like scurvy because of poor diet and had bald patches in their heads. So many of them did not have access to water, they could not afford soap for washing their clothes or bathing, nor wood for heating water. Women wore only their loose *pehlans* and it was because of the influence from the Punjab that gradually they began to wear *shalwars* under their gowns. The majority of the men wore straw sandals, hand made.

"I remember seeing from my uncle's house in Srinagar that when *Sheikh sahib* was released from jail in either 1933 or 1934 in August my uncle procured a car to bring him from jail to Amirakadal, where he was to make a speech. People ran along with the car and when it slowed down kissed it because it had brought their leader from jail.

"Every Friday *Sheikh sahib* used to go to Hazrat Bal for his prayers and hundreds of people used to throng there just to have a chance of seeing his face. Such was his influence over people that when he made a speech and asked for funds for his work, women would take off their *doputtas* and hold them out in the street so that people from the upper storeys of houses could throw down money. This also I had myself seen. No-one asked for what purpose the money was required, just on hearing his name people used to donate. It was enough that *Sheikh sahib* was asking for money for his work.

"I met *Begumsahiba* twice after her marriage and she was still in *purdah* but she used to organise meetings of the women and speak to them. She was a great help to her husband.

"*Sheikh sahib* wanted my uncle to enter politics with him, this was the time when there was only Muslim Conference, not National Conference, but because my uncle was a Government contractor he could not join *Sheikh sahib*. But they always remained close friends.

"In October, 1973 my uncle was in London when he suddenly died of a heart attack at the age of 68 years. The news reached *Sheikh sahib* in Srinagar where he was now back after having been released from detention and exile from Kashmir. He immediately telephoned to Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Pandit D. P. Dhar, who was at that time a Minister that they should arrange for my uncle's body to be brought back from London to Kashmir for burial. Such was his influence with people that the Indian Embassy in London arranged for the body to be flown to Delhi. Here it had to be kept for three days because of bad weather conditions before it could be flown to Srinagar for burial."

Begum Rahman's son-in-law, Shahzad Hamiyon, told me in Lahore that at the beginning of June, 1982 he was in Srinagar for a holiday. His cousin pressurised him into going to hear *Sheikh sahib* make a speech on Friday, June 4th at Hazrat Bal, after Juma prayers. At first he was reluctant but the cousin insisted:

'Once in your life you must come to Hazrat Bal and hear *Sheikh sahib*. You will never forget it and next year he may not be with us.'

This cousin was Mr. Javed Sheikh, whom I interviewed in 1983 in Srinagar. As Mr. Shahzad Hamiyon told me:

'It was a remarkable experience to hear him addressing an audience of thousands and I will always be glad I did go.'

This was the last public speech made in Srinagar by *Sheikh sahib* before his final illness.

One rule *Sheikh sahib* never forgot, he never allowed his politics

to interfere with friendships. Friendship was friendship, but politics was politics and if you happened to cross political swords with him, well that was too bad! It is also very true that he never forgot his friends, wherever they were, whether they were still of his political convictions or not. They were very important to him and he always remembered them with overwhelming affection, even if he had not seen them for years.

I met Malka Pukraj, the well-known radio and T.V. singer, in Lahore, who was born and grew up in Jammu and married Syed Shabbir Hussain Shah, father-in-law of Mr. S. M. Zafar, a former Law Minister of Pakistan. He was group liaison officer for the 565 States of India under the Resident, a Mr. Thompson, based in Lahore. Sheikh Shabbir Hussain Shah was a class-fellow of *Sheikh sahib's* at Islamia College, Lahore from 1925–27. In Jammu in 1931 riots broke out, processions were being taken out in Jammu and Srinagar and *Sheikh sahib* was part of it all. As he passed along the road with a procession he saw his old friend, known to all as "*Shah-ji*", whom he had not met for a number of years, standing by the road and immediately dropped out of the procession to embrace him and talk to him. As Malka Pukraj remembered the incident it must have been in 1932, which was the year when she married her husband.

Malka Pukraj told me that whenever she and her husband were in Jammu or Srinagar they would meet Sheikh Abdullah, for whom she had the greatest respect, and *Begumsahiba*. They also met Allah Rakhar Saghar, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, G. M. Sadiq, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad (whom she confessed she could never like) and Abdul Majid Qarshi. She said:

"Because I was not afraid of meeting *Sheikh sahib*, therefore, I got into some trouble but I still continued to meet him."

She was dismissed from Kashmir service in 1931 and is supposed to have played a part in the liberation of Kashmir movement, as suspected by the *Maharaja*.

From the age of eight to eighteen years Malka Pukraj was attached to the court of Maharaja Hari Singh. While we were chatting over a cup of tea a woman servant brought in a *hookah* for her. I asked from what age she had started what was now an almost extinct custom amongst women. She said:

"From the age of eight. My mother used to smoke a *hookah*, so I demanded and was given one!"

Now people all over the subcontinent remember the years of the thirties when Malka Pukraj stormed the music world with her inimitable style and resonant voice. Her most valuable contribution to music was popularising the *Dogri* and *Pahari* folk songs of the Jammu region. Now she has a charming, talented married daughter, Tahira, who teams with her mother in giving performances of *ghazals*, *Dogri* and *Punjabi* folk songs.

She is one of the outstanding singers and musicians of the Jammu Region. Besides her there are Allah Rakha and K. L. Sehgal and Jammu people feel proud of the contributions they have made in the field of *Pahari* music and *ragas*.

When I visited Srinagar in the summer of 1981 and showed *Sheikh sahib* some press cuttings of TV musical items of Malka Pukraj and her daughter Tahira reciting in Lahore, he remarked:

'Yes, I'm afraid she got into some trouble in those years on account of me.'

SARDAR MUHAMMAD IBRAHIM KHAN

Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, President of Azad Kashmir October 24th, 1947–50, 1957–59 and 1975–77 under the Bhutto regime, representing Azad Kashmir in the January, 1948, Session of United Nations at Lake Success, New York on the Kashmir question, said jokingly to me in March, 1984, in Lahore:—

“Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas established their personal capabilities over a long period of struggle, but I was lucky. It was fate that I became an international figure overnight without undergoing any suffering or sacrifice!”

He said about his early career:

“I was educated in a high school in the city of Poonch. I did my B.A. from Islamia College, Lahore. In those days regular debates were held, thus we students came into close contact with intellectuals like Dr. Taseer in the period I was there, 1933–37 and he introduced me to Dr. Iqbal, who kept open house at his home on Mayo Road for us students to discuss with him. I received a considerable amount of political and other education while in Lahore, which was the centre for newspapers, political meetings, etc. I owe a great deal to Lahore. While there I worked for the Labour Party and Chaudhry Rahmat Ali convinced me about the need for a Pakistan. At that time we students did not think that the Pakistan movement would become so strong so quickly until the 1940 Lahore Resolution was passed.

“In the meantime there was the Congress movement going on, 1933–37 and in 1937 the Congress ministries came into power and they treated Muslims like untouchables.

“I went abroad in 1938 and was there until 1942 and passed my Bar. I returned in 1943, started practice in Poonch and married. I was elected for the Poonch Assembly (city) in 1946 from Muslim Conference and became very active in politics. I settled in Srinagar in 1947 to practice in the High Court.

“In June, 1947 the new British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, visited Kashmir to discuss the problems of Kashmir's Accession with the *Maharaja*.

“Mahatma Gandhi came to Srinagar on 1st August, 1947. He met the *Maharani*, Prince Karan Singh, Maharaja Hari Singh, Ram Chandra Kak, also important *Dogras* and Pandit leaders and Begum Muhammad Abdullah. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, still banned from the State for his part in the Quit Kashmir movement accompanied him up to Rawalpindi. Gandhi returned on the 4th August *via* Jammu. Acharya Kripalani visited Srinagar just before him. Then Kak was dismissed and Janak Singh (a relative of the *Maharaja's*) appointed and then the *Dogra* forces were sent to Poonch.”

Sardar Ibrahim continued:—

“After August 15th, Faiz Ahmed Faiz accompanied by Mian Iftikharuddin came to Srinagar to meet those National Conference and Muslim Conference workers who were not in jail. They along with Taseer and me had a meeting in Taseer's house at Rajbagh and then it was decided to send me out of Srinagar to enter Poonch and stir up a revolt against the *Dogra raj*. Agha Shaukat Ali was to have accompanied me but the night before we were due to leave Srinagar the police came to his residence and arrested him.

“On the 24th August I came down to Lahore and in the first week of September, one after another Mian Amiruddin, Begum Shah Nawaz, Raja Gazanfar Ali Khan, the Central Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation and Mian Iftikharuddin, all made efforts to arrange an interview for me with Quaid-i-Azam, who was at that time in Lahore, but according to them their messages were not conveyed to him by his then Secretary, Mr. K. H. Khurshid.”

It was also *Sardar sahib's* impression that the Quaid-i-Azam did not desire to be associated with anything that was happening in the State of Jammu and Kashmir at that moment. He added:

“Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz had also introduced me on my arrival in Lahore to Mr. K. H. Khurshid and asked him to arrange for an interview with Quaid-i-Azam, but this was not done.

“At that time both G. M. Sadiq and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad were in Lahore and used to meet Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz in the office of “*Pakistan Times*”, of which he was Chief Editor.

Sardar Ibrahim Khan says in his book on this period of the Kashmir struggle:

"As a matter of fact the whole atmosphere was so uncertain, and everybody felt so awkward to approach the Quaid-i-Azam, that no one possessed enough courage to draw the attention of the Pakistan Governor-General to Kashmir Affairs and save so many *Mussalmans* from their impending tragic destiny. Pakistan herself was most tragically gripped by the problem of the influx of refugees. Complete chaos seemed to take possession of everything."¹

Mr. Faiz Ahmed Faiz also told me in an interview in 1983 that when Sardar Ibrahim Khan reached Lahore he introduced him to Mr. K. H. Khurshid, Quaid-i-Azam's Secretary and asked him to introduce *Sardar sahib* to Quaid-i-Azam, but this did not materialise.

At this time a number of people made what seemed to be hopeful plans in connection with Kashmir, but the one with which *Sardar sahib* was associated was that on October 2nd a plan was made with the agreement of Liaquat Ali Khan to start from Poonch and free first Poonch and then the rest of Kashmir and give them arms for fighting, instead of starting a revolt inside the State. He said Khawaja Abdur Rahim, then Commissioner, Rawalpindi had O.K.d this plan. Like others Sardar Ibrahim also laid the responsibility for sending the *Pathan* raiders into Kashmir at the door of Sardar Qaiyum Khan and Khurshid Anwar. Also in his opinion the stoppage of essential supplies to Kashmir from Rawalpindi from September was not a Government decision. It just happened, but it did make the people of Kashmir, especially the *Maharaja*, think that Pakistan had broken the Standstill Agreement.

One reason was the lack of *Sikh* lorry and truck drivers in West Punjab, which at that time could have been the reason because according to "*Pakistan Times*" of 13-9-47 the *Sikhs* living in West Punjab had been ordered by their High Command in Amritsar to evacuate that area and shift to East Punjab. They adopted a scorched earth policy and burnt or destroyed whatever they could before they left in convoys to cross the border.

It was during the periods of the tenth and eleventh Governments of Azad Kashmir, when Sardar Ibrahim was President, that Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas started his Kashmir Liberation Front, on

the occasion of the release and then re-arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in the early part of 1958 in Kashmir State. He was not on good terms with Sardar Ibrahim and when he was released from jail after the banning of his movement by the Pakistan Government in 1958, on May 14th, 1959 he nominated K. H. Khurshid, who had participated in the movement and also gone to jail with him, as President of the twelfth Government of Azad Kashmir. He was also President of the thirteenth Government, but now elected, in 1964 when Sheikh Abdullah, newly released from jail after 5½ years, came in May of that year to Pakistan for discussions with the Pakistan Government on the Kashmir question, at Nehru's behest.

Sardar Ibrahim Khan continued:

"I did not know Sheikh Abdullah personally in Kashmir, as I came on the scene not long before 1947 and then in the Muslim Conference, not National Conference. I met him in 1964 in Rawalpindi, when he came to Pakistan and was present in the public meeting held for him in Rawalpindi on May 25th. When he left for Muzaffarabad on the morning of the 27th he was received at Kohalla by Mr. K. H. Khurshid, then President of Azad Kashmir. The car in which the two of them sat for their journey to Muzaffarabad had been "bugged" so that all their conversation was recorded!

"All the time during his visit Sheikh Abdullah was surrounded by *Pakistani* C.I.D. When Mr. Naqshbandi, a member of Sheikh Abdullah's delegation came to my residence to see me his car was surrounded by four-five C.I.D. men.

"In the United Nations Session of January, 1948, when I represented Azad Kashmir and was accompanied by Dr. M. D. Taseer who was my adviser, I was unable to meet Sheikh Abdullah because the Indian intelligence people did not give him any opportunity to meet anyone from Pakistan. The meeting between Sheikh Abdullah, Dr. Taseer and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali which took place in a hotel in New York in January, 1948 was probably secretly arranged by Pandit T. N. Zutshi.

"In 1948 Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, who had been released from Jammu jail on February 28th, 1948 came to Pakistan, and was then Supreme Head of the Azad Kashmir Government and Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Refugee Council. He and

I met the U.N.C.I.P. of the Security Council (Commission) in Karachi during their discussions with the Government of India and Pakistan representatives in New Delhi and Karachi. This was 10th July to 13th August. We also met two of the members on September 14th in Azad Kashmir."

Sardar Ibrahim added that even in November and December, 1948 during the internal struggle between Indian army forces and Azad Kashmir Brigade a huge migration of population started from the whole of the Mandhar Valley and Rajouri area towards Pakistan, not less than two lakhs of people.

Sardar Ibrahim said about Sheikh Abdullah:

"In my opinion there is no doubt that he is the greatest leader Kashmir had known since the days of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin Budshah, who ruled in Kashmir 1420-70, the most famous of the *Sultans*, the great monarch who was popular amongst Hindus as well as Muslims."

Sardar Ibrahim Khan had said in his book on the Kashmir struggle about Sheikh Abdullah:

"Sheikh Abdullah had differed with Pandit Nehru on the pertinent question of Accession of the State to India. Experience had proved to Sheikh Abdullah that it was not an easy job to go along with Hindus and a Hindu Government, although this Hindu Government was then presided over by a confirmed liberal like Nehru himself. In consequence of his holding these views Sheikh Abdullah suffered incarceration for more than ten years. In these sufferings he bore insult and humiliation with courage and steadfastness. He stood by his convictions. No temptation came in the way of Sheikh Abdullah in his stand on the question of the inalienable right of the people of Kashmir *vis-a-vis* the question of plebiscite. No sufferings or humiliation could make his mind change. His family bore insults and privation. They all stood firm and faced the might of the Government of India for twelve years or so.

"Sheikh Abdullah's leadership is established. His place in history is assured for all times to come. His other colleagues deserve just as much praise and credit. Leaders of this calibre are the surest guarantee to a people's struggle for freedom and its success in the end."²

Sardar Ibrahim finished by saying:

"I feel that no Government of Pakistan has ever been helpful in solving the Kashmir problem and at present the future of our country does not look very bright. I am now sixty-eight years of age, the time to feel that the younger generation should take on the struggle. If we struggle it will be a political one. I feel personally that Kashmir should be united and free and if possible Pakistan should be established in a democratic way and then the *Kashmiri* people should join."

Sardar Ibrahim Khan has also written in the same book:

"Certain facts within my personal knowledge have been withheld. History should one day know some of those facts. I propose to write them down and they will be published, when the Kashmir issue has been settled for all times or after my death."³

I did not ask Sardar Ibrahim nor did he himself mention the story, which has been confirmed by several sources, of the first abortive Azad Kashmir Government, said to have been formed by Sheikh Abdullah's once very loyal worker, Ghulam Nabi Gilkar Anwar, in Rawalpindi on October 4th, 1947, and which was to have its headquarters in Muzaffarabad. The President of this government was Ghulam Nabi Gilkar himself, with twelve Ministers.

The statement is supported by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz in his book and this information was also printed in the "*Civil and Military Gazette*", Lahore on 7th October, 1947 and "*The Light*", Lahore, 8th October, 1947. Prem Nath Bazaz also says the news was broadcast by *Radio Pakistan*, which announced the name of the President as "Anwar".⁴

Mr. Anwar was the name Gilkar used in forming this government. After October 4th, he returned to Srinagar to arrest Hari Singh, the *Maharaja* of Jammu and Kashmir, but instead he was himself arrested and imprisoned for 13 months.

When he came to Pakistan again in January, 1949 he said in a public meeting in Jamia Masjid, Rawalpindi that he was the man who had formed that Government on 4th October, 1947 and that it was now headed by Sardar Ibrahim Khan.

Later on Mr. Faiz Abbasi, Editor of "*Pak Kashmir*", Rawalpindi admitted on 2nd October, 1963 in that journal that Sardar Ibrahim was the second President of Azad Kashmir and the first President was Ghulam Nabi Gilkar Anwar on October 4th, 1947.

The announcement of the formation of this government was also given in the Urdu paper "*Jang Azadi Kashmir*" of 4-10-47 of Siakot.

Mir Abdul Aziz, editor of "*Insaf*" wrote in "*Pakistan Times*" on 25th October, 1947 that the first government was formed on October 4th and the same Ministry was re-organised by Sardar Ibrahim with the following Ministers on October 24th:—

Sardar Ibrahim Khan, President.

Syed Ali Ahmed Shah, Minister.

Chaudhry Abdullah Khan Bhalli, Minister.

Khawaja Ghulam Din Wani, Minister.

Sayed Nazir Hussain Shah, Minister.

Mr. Sanaullah Shamim, Minister.

This news was also given in the "*Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, on 29-10-47.

Of this Ministry two members are still alive and living in Rawalpindi, Mr. Sanaullah Shamim and Khawaja Ghulam Din Wani, while Sayed Ali Ahmed Shah is now an old man and lives in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir.

However, in actual fact due to the policy of the Pakistan Government and rifts in the Muslim Conference between two parties no stable government was ever established in Azad Kashmir until 1985.

Since 1947 Azad Kashmir has had twenty-two Governments, as follows:—

The first Government was formed on 4th October, 1947 by Mr. G. N. Gilkar Anwar.

The second Government on October 24th, 1947, headed by Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The third Government on March 15th, 1948, headed by Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The fourth Government on May 30th, 1950, headed by Col. Ali Ahmed Shah.

The fifth Government on December 4th, 1951, headed by Maulana Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah.

The sixth Government on June 20th, 1953, headed by Col. Sher Ahmed Khan.

The seventh Government on May 14th, 1954, headed by Col. Sher Ahmed Khan.

The eighth Government on May 31st, 1956, headed by Maulana Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah.

The ninth Government on September 8th, 1956, headed by Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan.

The tenth Government on April 13th, 1957, headed by Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The eleventh Government on August 31st, 1958, headed by Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The twelfth Government on May 14th, 1959, headed by Mr. K. H. Khurshid.

The thirteenth Government on October 12th, 1961, headed by Mr. K. H. Khurshid.

The fourteenth Government on August 16th, 1964, headed by Khan Abdul Hamid Khan.

The fifteenth Government on October 8th, 1969, headed by Brig. Abdul Rahman Khan.

The sixteenth Government in November, 1969, headed by Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan.

The seventeenth Government in April, 1975, headed by Sheikh Manzar Masud.

The eighteenth Government on June 5, 1975, headed by Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The nineteenth Government in November, 1977, headed by Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The twentieth Government—Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan was removed and Brig. Muhammad Hayat Khan was appointed as President of Azad Kashmir in November 1978.

The twenty-first Government—Brig. Muhammad Hayat Khan and then (Retd.) Major Gen. Abdul Rahman was appointed as President of Azad Kashmir in February, 1983.

The twenty-second Government—1st February, 1983, headed by (Retd.) Major Gen. Abdul Rahman.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections were held in April, 1985 under the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Act of 1974. In these elections the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference won the majority of seats, so this party formed the Government under the Premiership of Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan and Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan has been elected as President of the State by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council for a period of five years.⁵

The first elected Government was headed by Mr. K. H. Khurshid in 1961. Before this the formation of Azad Kashmir Government was in accordance with the Rules of Business in which the Muslim Conference was authorised to recommend the name of the Head of the Azad Kashmir Government and then the Pakistan Government approved the same.

In 1964 an Act was introduced named "Azad Kashmir Act", 1964 and Rules of Business was abolished.

Similarly another Act was introduced in 1974 that by this Act of 1974 the parliamentary system of government was introduced in Azad Kashmir, with an Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council, headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

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MR. K. H. KHURSHID, FIRST ELECTED PRESIDENT AZAD KASHMIR

I had an interview with Mr. K. H. Khurshid at the end of 1982 in Lahore. He had started his career after college education in Srinagar as Private Secretary to Quaid-i-Azam, 1944–1947, replacing Mr. Matlubul Hasan Saiyad, who was Private Secretary from 1940–44, then editor of "*Light*" of Bombay, founded in 1946 by Quaid-i-Azam to propagate the Muslim League's viewpoint in politics but which closed in 1947 due to the campaign of Congress Ministries.

Mr. Khurshid was President of Azad Kashmir, 1959–62 and 1962–64. He worked steadfastly for Mohtarama Miss Fatima Jinnah during her Election campaign of the 1964 Pakistan Elections. He now practises law in the High and Supreme Courts, Lahore and in the High Court, Muzaffarabad. He is President of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League founded in September, 1962 and active in politics in Azad Kashmir, where there is no bar.

After the death of Sheikh Abdullah on September 8th, 1982, as President of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League, Mr. Khurshid said in a memorial meeting in Lahore:

"Sheikh Abdullah had become a legendary figure in his own lifetime and was the central figure in Kashmir politics for over fifty years. Sheikh Abdullah's role in creating political consciousness and awareness of their rights among the people, especially Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir and his contribution for the establishment of a democratic rule under the *Dogra*s was unsurpassed. He later became an ardent champion of Indo-Pakistan friendship through which he hoped ultimately the question of Kashmir could be solved honourably and peacefully. His sufferings as a *Kashmiri* will be written in the history of Kashmir in golden letters.

"He was a symbol of unity and a torch-bearer for *Kashmiri* Muslims. His contribution towards the education and uplift of the down-trodden masses of Jammu and Kashmir for over half a century will go down in the history of Kashmir."

Mr. Khurshid told me:

"Students of Kashmir came into the politics of pre-1947 days

while still students. I myself joined Sri Partap College, Srinagar, in 1939. In April, 1940 the Pakistan Resolution of the All India Muslim League was passed in Lahore. In this meeting Sheikh Abdullah along with Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq was also present. By that time the Muslim Conference in Kashmir had been converted into the National Conference so in Kashmir many people now began to think along different lines and about the future."

As a student Khurshid had the reputation of being a powerful orator. He continued:

"Some of us students thought we should support the Pakistan movement so we set up the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Students' Union in October, 1942, of which I was an office bearer. In the first session Dr. M. D. Taseer, then Principal of Amar Singh College, was present. In 1942 the Muslim Conference was revived and I supported the idea of Pakistan and the Muslim Students' Union started working in co-operation with the Muslim Conference of Kashmir. As against Muslim Students' Union there was Kashmir National Students' Federation, supported by Ghulam Mohyuddin Kara, first a member of the Muslim Conference and then a founder member of the National Conference. This was a pro-Congress students' body and Sheikh Abdullah was giving it moral support and financial help.

"In August, 1943 we had an issue about the Muslim newspaper, "*Dawn*". We wanted our college to purchase the paper and it was refused by the Principal, Malhotra Sundar Das. The entry of "*Dawn*" into Government offices was banned. There was no written order but it seems that heads of institutions had been verbally told to discontinue its subscription. I as General Secretary and Mr. S. A. Rehman, as Organising Secretary of Muslim Students' Union met the Prime Minister, Sir Maharaj Singh in May, 1943, the Director of Education and the Chief Secretary, then finally the Prime Minister ordered that "*Dawn*" should be allowed in the college library. I was responsible for taking the matter up to the Prime Minister's level.

"In 1942 when the Quit India movement was launched Sheikh Abdullah did not participate in it but the National Students' Federation decided to boycott their classes in sympathy with this movement. They also opposed the idea of Pakistan. As a

result there was tension amongst the groups of students and some clashes took place in 1942-43, starting in August, 1942.

"In 1943 we students invited Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang, who was the President of the All India States Muslim League. We invited him for the annual conference of the Muslim Conference in Srinagar, but after arrival he was made to leave the State within twenty-four hours, so the Conference did not take place." He took temporary refuge in the Murree house of Sheikh Sadiq Hassan, a prominent Muslim Leaguer of Amritsar, as his daughter, Begum Masud Sadiq told me in Lahore in February, 1984.

"In May, 1944, Quaid-i-Azam was invited by both the National Conference and the Muslim Conference and some time after his arrival in Srinagar from Jammu, accompanied by Miss Fatima Jinnah we students, i.e. Muslim Students' Union, along with the Kashmir Muslim Conference invited him for a session at Juma Masjid, in June. He accepted and came. Ours was the only students' body in the State to be addressed by the Quaid-i-Azam."

Mr. K. H. Khurshid, having impressed him by his dedication to the pro-Pakistan cause, was then invited by Quaid-i-Azam during his visit to join his staff as his Private Secretary. He worked with Quaid-i-Azam until September, 1947, when the latter gave him leave to visit his family in Kashmir. However, soon after arrival in Srinagar on October 2nd he was arrested, which frankly I think he should have expected, kept in solitary confinement for some time and finally released from jail with other pro-Pakistan elements like Agha Shaukat Ali, a member of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, in 1949 and sent in Pakistan.

"Pakistan Times, 30-10-47 reported:

"Sheikh Abdullah in New Delhi on 29th October was asked whether he would release the few imprisoned leaders of the Kashmir Muslim Conference. He said that the question had to be considered from the security point of view. His first business was to restore law and order by driving out the invaders and continued that obviously no Fifth Columnists could be tolerated."

After Khurshid's release from jail in 1949 and return to Pakistan he first went to Karachi to meet Miss Jinnah. While there he was

offered a job by the then Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, which he refused as Miss Jinnah had strained relations with Liaquat Ali at that time.

Then in Lahore Khurshid and the late Aziz Beg, journalist, together started a weekly, "*Guardian*", which had an anti-Liaquat Ali Khan Policy. In 1954 he went to London to do his Bar and on return practiced in Karachi. In 1957 he married his cousin, Suraiya, daughter of Dr. Noor Hussain of Sialkot, one of the signatories to the *nikahnama* of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, performed in 1941 in Srinagar by Sheikh Abdullah.

In 1958 Sheikh Abdullah was re-arrested, 100 days after being released from Kud Jail in January of that year. There was great resentment in Azad Kashmir and Sardar Ibrahim, the then President of Azad Kashmir and Khurshid participated in the Kashmir Liberation movement, which was started in 1958 by Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. Thousands of *Kashmiris* demonstrated and many were jailed. Khurshid was one of those arrested. The *Kashmiris* wanted to break the Cease-Fire Line and go to held Kashmir, which meant complications with India, so the Pakistan Government banned the movement.

Even though all these protesters were originally against Sheikh Abdullah and believed in the two-nation theory, seeing him unjustly arrested by the Indian Government people in Pakistan objected and campaigned for his release. Further, when he came to Pakistan in May, 1964 newly released from nearly eleven years of incarceration thousands of people, mostly *Kashmiris*, collected at the Rawalpindi airport to receive him, attend his public meeting in Rawalpindi and joined his cavalcade on the way to Muzaffarabad. All earlier political differences were forgotten.

In May 1959, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas nominated Khurshid as President of the twelfth Government of Azad Kashmir. He remained until October 12th, 1961, when he was elected under the new Azad Kashmir Act as President of the thirteenth Government. He remained until August 5th, 1964, so he was still President when Sheikh Abdullah came to Pakistan in May, 1964.

Sheikh Abdullah, recently released from nearly eleven years of detention, accepted Pakistan's invitation to come there for discussions over the future status of Kashmir. His visit had been approved by Pandit Nehru who was, one might say, actually using him as a bridge

for negotiations. Nearly eleven years' incarceration had not dimmed Sheikh Abdullah's determination to continue the struggle for the people of his State as he thought best and the tumultuous welcome he received after his release and the publicity, both national and international, given to his speeches during his subsequent tours in Jammu and Kashmir were indicative to the Delhi lobby of the great hold he still had on his people in spite or maybe because of three changes of regime in Jammu and Kashmir.

At a Conference held in Delhi at the beginning of April, 1964 (Emergency Cabinet Committee) the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (recently recovered from a stroke) in saying that a new approach had to be made and change in the thinking about Kashmir, commented:

"Sheikh Abdullah still had a strong hold on the people of Kashmir and in the changed circumstances no political settlement in the Valley could be thought of without bringing him in."

From October, 1947 as Chief Emergency Administrator and then as Prime Minister until August 1953 Sheikh Abdullah had headed the State. In August, 1953 he was dismissed by his own Deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and imprisoned for five years without trial. On January 8th, 1958 he was released, only to be re-arrested after four months, i.e. on April 30th. He was released unconditionally on April 8th, 1964 when the demand for his release became worldwide.

When Sheikh Abdullah returned to Jammu and Kashmir after his release he was given a tumultuous welcome and toured the whole of the State. In all the many speeches he made he was quoted by the Indian press as having given emphasis to only self-determination for the people of his State and a Plebiscite and the insistence that so far Accession to India was not final. He also emphasised that the Kashmir problem concerned India, Pakistan and Kashmir and a leading article in *"Hindustan Times"* (20-4-1964), *"Our Great Opportunity in Kashmir"* by Jayaprakash Narayan, stressed the need for Indo-Pakistan friendship. The foreign press likewise commented on the need to solve the Kashmir problem.

The following extracts from Sheikh Abdullah's speeches made throughout the State during April after his release, as reported in Indian, Pakistan and American Press, reveal a man of vigour and

vision, ready to forge ahead with a mission, details of which he had already shaped in his mind and not a man soured and disillusioned by nearly eleven years of incarceration, which he had every right to be. They also emphasise that Delhi realised the urgent need for serious re-thinking on the future role of Kashmir.

SHEIKH ABDULLAH SPEAKS

"*Times of India*", Bombay, April 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 1964

"We have to win hearts, and if we fail in this regard, we cannot win by force. Britishers ruled us with force. Because they failed to win our hearts, they had to depart from India. One can rule by force for some time and not for all times."

"Sheikh Abdullah said his incarcerations had not weakened his resolve to secure the right of self-determination for the people of the State. He denied that the State's Accession to India had been settled by the Kashmir Constituent Assembly. Accession, he added was brought about by putting him in jail and buying and intimidating members of the Constituent Assembly."

"Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg also demanded that the people of Kashmir should be given the right of self-determination. Both Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg lashed out at the Shamsuddin and Bakshi Ministries, which they alleged were corrupt."

He added:

"India had also 'failed to settle the dispute by putting him in jail for 11 years. Any solution which did not have the backing of the people would not be lasting'."

"*Statesman*" New Delhi, April 14th, 10th, 19th, 20th, 1964

"For the first time since his release slogans such as 'Plebiscite *Zindabad*' and 'Its fate shall be decided by us' were raised at the Sheikh's meeting. His speech matched the mood of his audience. *Kashmiris*, he declared, would not be treated as 'dumb, driven cattle'."

"An important feature of the day's speech by the Sheikh was his vigorous advocacy for strengthening the organization of the Plebiscite Front as the most suitable instrument for realizing *Kashmiris'* wishes."

"Apparently referring to the persistent slogans for a Plebiscite

raised at the meeting, Sheikh Abdullah told the crowd, estimated at 100,000:

'The eyes of the world are seeing that the *Kashmiri* people reject the Indian claim that Kashmir's Accession to India is final'.

"He added that the people of Kashmir would not rest content until they were given an opportunity to decide their future freely."

"Since early morning lorry loads of people from outside (Srinagar) have been pouring into the city chanting "*Sher-i-Kashmir Zindabad*" and "We want Plebiscite"—Slogans which were later raised by the vast crowds with great enthusiasm."

"*Dawn*", Karachi, April 21, 1964

"On arrival at Rawalkot (Azad Kashmir) Dr. Bunche said that the people greeted him at Srinagar with placards demanding the right of self-determination. He said a crowd of people had also called on U.N. Observers' Headquarters to voice their feelings."

"*Hindustan Times*", New Delhi, April 20th, 1964

"What after all is the substance of Sheikh Abdullah's statements? This, that the future of Kashmir has to be decided by the people of Kashmir and that it has to be done in a manner that the dispute about it between India and Pakistan is amicably ended. With a little imagination it was possible to see that this clear and principled stand of the *Kashmiri* leader opened for India a wonderful opportunity that could be exploited to the advantage of all concerned."

"The history of the post-Independence years has proved another incontestable fact, that neither India nor Pakistan can live and grow unless there is friendship and co-operation between them. The lack of such relationship between them has, among other things, upset the power balance in South and South-East India, depriving the subcontinent of the role that history and geography had destined it to play. The result was the tilting of the balance in favour of China—a most unhealthy state of affairs. The Kashmir question has to be viewed in this broad perspective."

"Daily News", Chicago, April 2nd, 1964

"Both the *Pakistani* and the Indian Governments have to give the people living in the Kashmir region a chance to voice their opinions. It is our belief that the only alternative is a Plebiscite in Kashmir. Thus can an outlet be found for the true voice of the people, no matter which side wins in the end.

"It is our belief and sincere wish that the two concerned nations bow, whatever the outcome, to popular will. Otherwise, this will be an act which will openly crush the rights of the people of Kashmir and we do not believe that either the Government of Pakistan or the Government of India will do such a thing.

"Now Pakistan has brought the Kashmir issue up to the Security Council. It is our wish that the Security Council attach the importance it deserves to the Kashmir issue."

"Washington Star", April 22nd, 1964

"Sheikh Abdullah told foreign newsmen at Srinagar that he favoured negotiated settlement for Kashmir acceptable to both India and Pakistan. He said he had two pictures of Nehru. One is when he fought side by side for India's freedom. The other is a most ugly picture in my heart. But that picture I want to erase. He reasserted his desire to see Pakistan President Muhammad Ayub Khan as well as Nehru. I see no reason why I should not meet Pakistan's leaders. There will be no Kashmir solution until all three peoples of India, Pakistan and Kashmir are satisfied."

The news of Sheikh Abdullah's possible visit in May reached Pakistan two months earlier so a special room and bathroom were built for him in the Muzaffarabad President's House, which was rather small and in view of his unusual height (6 feet, 4 inches) a special bed had to be made.

Khurshid's wife, Suraiya, whom I had known in Kashmir since she was a small child told me that when Sheikh Abdullah arrived in Pindi Airport on May 25th there were thousands of people there, mostly *Kashmiris* from all parts of the Punjab, all waiting to see his face, some not since 1947, and to welcome him. He was accompanied by his son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Sheikh Rashid, his nephew, Pir

Abdul Ghani, Mr. Naqshbandi, Khawaja Mubarak Shah, Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, Maulana Masudi. The Pakistan Government had made elaborate protocol arrangements for his reception. Before he could alight from the plane Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, both his erstwhile political opponents, rushed up its steps to greet him. As he came down from the plane and saw all the thousands of his fellow *Kashmiris*, many of whom he had known in earlier years, emotionally he broke all protocol arrangements and rushed forward to embrace them, crying:

"I must meet all my *Kashmiri* brothers."

One of the first was Mr. Khurshid.

What a very moving occasion that must have been for those who were present. Sheikh Abdullah released from nearly eleven years of incarceration (and soon to return to jail and political exile from 1965-72) coming to the area he had not seen since 1947, i.e. seventeen years earlier and meeting numbers of his fellow *Kashmiris* of all kinds—some who had been political partners in the early days of the struggle against the *Dogra* and British *raj* and who had then parted company on a question of principle, those who had come over to Pakistan because they believed in the two-nation theory, some who had come in 1947-48 as refugees from Jammu, having lost some members of their families in their flight, some old friends from earlier days in what was now Pakistan, some young people who had only heard of him as a legend.

In September, 1983 when I was in Srinagar, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, now Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir and who accompanied his father on his visit to Pakistan in 1964 related:

"When our party alighted from the plane at Rawalpindi on May 25th Sheikh Abdullah was put in a closed car with a police escort for the journey to West Pakistan House, but when he saw the large crowds of people lining the route from the airport he got out of the car and stood in the police jeep so that people could see him go by."

A public meeting in Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi had been arranged for the same evening in which over two lakhs of people were present, including thousands of women. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan presided over the meeting, in which he made acknowledgement to Sheikh Abdullah as a great leader.

Sheikh Abdullah started his speech with a recitation from the Holy *Koran* in his melodious voice, then quoted verses from Allama Iqbal, then started his speech. Now came the time for prayers. It was announced. *Sheikh sahib* stopped his speech and said:

'In my country we Muslims are not exempted from this duty. In Pakistan perhaps you are. But as we are not exempted, therefore, permit me to go down on my knees.'

People present said:

'We were put to shame. We were wearing suits and couldn't kneel down easily.'

Not one person moved while *Sheikh sahib* and some others said their prayers. Then he went on with his speech.

Before leaving for Azad Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah had two meetings with the President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan.

On the 27th morning Sheikh Abdullah, accompanied by his own deputation, left Rawalpindi for Muzaffarabad via Murree and Kohalla, where he was received by Mr. K. H. Khurshid, with a long cavalcade of people accompanying him. He reached there at about 11 a.m., where Suraiya, as the President's wife also welcomed him. It was only then that he realised that she was the grown-up daughter of his dear Jammu friend, Dr. Noor Hussain, whom he had been seeing in Jammu and Srinagar since she was a small child. Dr. Noor Hussain had also come from Sialkot, where he had settled as Public Health Officer, to meet *Sheikh sahib*. Suraiya told me that her father said:

"Please *Sheikh sahib*, do something about the opening of the Jhelum route from here to Kashmir. We want to be able to visit there to meet our families and our old homes. We must have some relief from the heat of the Punjab, to which we are not used."

And *Sheikh sahib* replied:

"Do not worry, Dr. *sahib*, I have come for this very purpose."

People came pouring into the house to meet *Sheikh sahib*,

mostly *Kashmiris* even from Lahore, so it was a very moving occasion. A large public meeting had been planned for the evening, but not long after *Sheikh sahib*'s arrival a telephone call was received that Pandit Nehru had fallen ill in Delhi with a heart attack. *Sheikh sahib* was very upset and went inside his room to pray. Just as he came out a second telephone call was received to say that Pandit Nehru had expired.

The Secretary for Azad Kashmir in 1964 at the time when Sheikh Abdullah came to Pakistan was Mr. Abdul Bari. His wife related to me in March, 1984 how after the first telephone call was received by her husband of Nehru's heart attack and the news conveyed to Sheikh Abdullah, a second call came through and a voice at the other end asked:

"Who is speaking?"

The reply came:

"The Secretary for Azad Kashmir!"

Then Mr. Bari heard the receiver being put down with a bang at the other end and a voice asked the operator to convey to the Pakistan authorities the information that Jawaharlal Nehru had just expired!

There is a very moving photograph of Sheikh Abdullah sitting on a *sofa* with Khurshid, weeping. Then he said:

'I came on a mission from Pandit Nehru so the public meeting planned for this evening will now be a condolence meeting for him.'

And it was.

Then on the same evening at the conclusion of that meeting he left for 'Pindi, had one more session with President Ayub Khan and returned the next day to Delhi for Nehru's funeral, so he did not even use the special bed which had been made for him in Muzaffarabad!

Kashmiris still cynically say that right up to the last moment of his life Pandit Nehru, by dying just then, prevented attempts to solve the Kashmir problem as it then was.

Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, at that time Pakistan's Foreign Minister, has written in his book:

"Sheikh Abdullah visited Pakistan in May, 1964 after his release from an Indian jail in Kashmir, flattered by Nehru, who sent him to Rawalpindi to woo President Ayub. I had cautioned Ayub Khan against Nehru's game.

"Abdullah was a welcome visitor to Ayub Khan. He persuaded the President of Pakistan to undertake a trip to New Delhi in June, 1964 for talks with Nehru on the Indo-Pakistan problems, including Kashmir. Nehru's death upset everything. Abdullah had to cut short his visit to Azad Kashmir; He flew back to India to attend the funeral of Nehru."¹

* * * * *

Now in 1965, Sheikh Abdullah set out to go on *Haj* and to visit a number of countries where, in his speeches and press conferences, he continued to project the same theme of the right of *Kashmiris* to exercise self determination and the need for establishing good relationship between India and Pakistan. He was accompanied by his wife and Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg. In a speech delivered during the Muslim World Conference which he attended at Makkah Mokarram, where he was described as:

"His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah (Lion of Kashmir), Former Prime Minister and Leader of the *Kashmiri* People".

he said on 21st April, 1965:

"Seventeen years have lapsed and the people of Jammu and Kashmir have not so far been allowed to exercise their right of self-determination nor has the United Nations done anything effective which will make the holding of a Plebiscite in the State possible. India, after supporting the people's right to self-determination for many, many years, is trying to back out from her commitments by declaring that the holding of a Plebiscite in the Jammu and Kashmir State has now become out of date."

"Before I left the shores of India on my present pilgrimage to *Haj*, I fully made it known both to the authorities and the

general public in India that during my tour in foreign countries I shall be placing the *Kashmiri* people's point of view before the world. As you know, till now either the viewpoint of India or that of Pakistan had been projected in the outside world and the viewpoint of the people of the State who are actual victims of this controversy had gone by default. Accordingly, as the representative of the people of Kashmir, I have been explaining the Kashmir question from the viewpoint of the people themselves. Five and a half million people of Kashmir are not a piece of property to be bartered away this way or that way.

"The people of Kashmir sincerely believe that in the friendship of India and Pakistan lies their own salvation. So nothing can be dearer to the heart of a *Kashmiri* than to see these two great countries march hand in hand together as real comrades and friends in the achievement of world peace and prosperity.

"Early solution of the Kashmir dispute is in our considered opinion an important condition for establishing good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan. Any further delay in this is bound to aggravate the situation which is potentially fraught with great dangers not only to the peace of the subcontinent but to the whole region of South-East Asia. All that the people of Kashmir are demanding is that they should be enabled to exercise their birthright of self-determination in accordance with the United Nations Resolutions which constitute an international agreement."

A copy of the above speech, of which I have quoted relevant extracts, was given to me by Khawaja Ghulam Din Wani (*ex-Minister, Azad Kashmir*) who was deputed by the Pakistan Government to accompany Sheikh Abdullah along with his wife and Mirza Afzal Beg on this tour, and who remained with them up to the time of the Conference in Makkah Mokarram.

Because of this and the various speeches *Sheikh sahib* made in the countries they visited and his reputedly accepting an invitation in Algiers extended by Chou en Lai to visit Peoples China before return to India in May 1965, on arrival in New Dehli Airport their Passports were cancelled and they were arrested. Sheikh Abdullah and Afzal Beg were sent to Octacamund in South India, 2,000 miles from Kashmir and *Begumsahiba* was externed to Dehli.

Khawaja Ghulam Din Wani was himself born in Baramulla and first remembers meeting Sheikh Abdullah there when he was a middle class student. His elder brother, Khawaja Salamuddin was a very close associate of Sheikh Abdullah's from 1932-33. When he went in processions at Baramulla people used to run after him to try to pluck hairs from his head as souvenirs and once he rushed into *Wani's* house to take shelter from the crowds. *Wani sahib* added that when he changed Muslim Conference into Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in 1938 their family did not continue to meet him because they did not approve of the change.

Khawaja Wani did his M.A. and LL.B. from Aligarh and returned from there in 1944 to start his Law practice, first in Srinagar and then in Muzaffarabad. He became a member of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and was its Acting General Secretary for Muzaffarabad District, but in 1947 he migrated to Pakistan, where he became a Minister in Azad Kashmir Government.

After returning from Makkah Mokarram in 1965 he continued to keep in touch with Sheikh Abdullah and received the following letter from him from jail in 1967:

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

From: Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah c/o Collector, Municipal
Committee.
Dated 24th April, 1967.

My dear *Wani sahib*,

May peace of Allah be upon you:

I thank you for your *Id* greetings which I heartily reciprocate. The day reminds us of one lesson: Righteous conduct alone will earn God's Compassion.

The only remedy to mental disquiet and agony is complete surrender to God. Never will a person come to ruin if he, reposing total faith in Him, worships God with devotion in the form and manner in which Prophet Abraham (may peace be upon him) had done, when his Lord said to him: "Bow (the will) to Me." He said "I bow (my will) to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe. (Ref. *Sura Baqara*, Sec. 16).

Let us all, on this auspicious day, resolve firmly to drive away from heart and mind, all the false gods of pride, power and wealth and, following the path that this great Prophet (Abraham) has shown to us, bow our will to the will of the one and only Universal God and earn His Compassion.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH

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ROLE OF THE PUNJAB PRESS

Besides the political struggle of a people against tyranny there is the struggle for the right of the freedom of the Press and in this the Punjab played a large part in the Kashmir Freedom movement from outside.

Starting from when the British annexed the Punjab in 1849 the first issue of an English weekly, "*The Punjabee*" appeared in Lahore, founded by Syed Muhammad Azim, who had earlier founded the "*Lahore Chronicle*", on February, 23rd, 1857.

In 1846, when the British rulers in India sold the entire territory of Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh for the sum of 75 lakhs of rupees, the first voice raised in the support of its Muslim population, now the slaves of a tyrant, was "*The Punjabee*", which wrote on May 9th, 1857:

"By the brutality and tyranny of that incarnation of sensuality, avarice and all evil, Maharaja Golab Singh, *Cashmere* is rapidly being converted into a melancholy desert."

"The smiling fields now lie waste, happy hamlets have turned wretched collections of ruined homesteads and desolate hearths." "And all this is the work of one demon, to whose tender mercies an enlightened Christian Government have made over the most beautiful valley in the world."¹

Dr. Abdus Salam Khurshid has also quoted in his book:

"In 1889 an Indian paper, "*Amrita Bazar Patrika*", an English daily of Calcutta printed a secret document of the Foreign Office of British India regarding Kashmir, with the result that the Government of British India enforced a law for secret documents, stating that those persons who disclose such secrets will receive imprisonment of five years or be exiled from India for two years and whosoever will try to obtain such information or publish such secret documents will be put behind the bars."²

Coming to this century weeklies about the much needed uplift of *Kashmiris* under the *Dogra raj* were being published in Lahore from as early as 1909, of which hundreds of copies were smuggled into the State.

There was Munshi Muhammad Din Fouq's weekly, "*Kashmiri Magazine*" and the "*Kashmir Gazette*" of Sheikh Jan Muhammad Ganai. In the twenties the leading Muslim newspapers had begun to take up the cause of Muslim Kashmir—"Muslim Outlook", "*Al Fazal*", "*Al-Aman*" and "*Siasat*", "*Inquilab*" and "*Zamindar*" of Lahore.

Maulana Hamid Ali Khan, brother of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, had the following to say in Lahore about the role played by "*Zamindar*":

"The "*Zamindar*" was originally started as a weekly paper from Lahore in 1903 by Maulana Sirajuddin Ahmad Khan, father of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. He was an illustrious social and political worker, a fervent supporter of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's movement and participated in the Muslim Education Conference meeting at Delhi in 1892. He attended the first session of the All India Muslim League held at Karachi in December, 1907. He and his paper, "*Zamindar*" played a prominent role in the 1907 rural disturbances in the Punjab. He died at the age of 59 in 1909 and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan then became editor of "*Zamindar*", which remained at the forefront of national politics for several decades."

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was a multifaceted personality of many gifts. He was a great linguist and scholar, translator, poet, orator, journalist, a fighter and a popular leader of the Muslims of the subcontinent. He took up causes not only of the Indian Muslims, but of Muslims in other parts of the world too. As one of the foremost leaders of the Khilafat Movement of 1920, which was a movement of the Muslim masses, he was in close contact with the Congress during that period—like the other Muslims of the subcontinent.

Up to 1924 no newspaper was allowed to be published in the State, now there are more than 250 dailies, weeklies and periodicals published in Jammu and Kashmir. The national movement was being crushed by Maharaja Hari Singh's government and one method was by denying any press freedom.

One cannot speak of the great influence and support given by the Punjab press, especially Lahore, to the Kashmir cause without making special mention of Maulana Abdul Majid Salik, born in 1894, and of his newspaper, "*Inquilab*" started in 1927 and that of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, "*Zamindar*" which two probably made the greatest impact in Jammu and Kashmir. "*Zamindar*" was started in 1924 when Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was a Congress member and was pro-Abdullah. Later he joined the Muslim League and was then anti-Abdullah, as was Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah. By 1942 he was such an important front rank Muslim Leaguer that when the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was revived in Jammu at the meeting of April 17–19th, 1942 Maulana Zafar Ali Khan inaugurated the Conference presided over by Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Khan. He was renowned as a religious scholar, a rare *na'at* reciter, an essayist and a great journalist.

Before 1931 papers such as "*Siyasat*" and "*Muslim Outlook*" had been banned in the State for projecting their anti-Government views and "*Inquilab*" was the last to be banned in 1931. Immediately declarations for other newspapers, "*Kashmiri Mussulman*", "*Kashmiri Mazloom*" and then "*Maktoob-i-Kashmir*" (sold on the streets for one pice per copy) were taken out by Muslim groups in Lahore working for Kashmir. Printed in Lahore they were smuggled into the State in lorries, trucks and cars and sold in thousands. The Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu helped in their distribution in Riaz, Udampur, Sopore, Mirpur, Kishtwar, Bemban, Srinagar, Shupyan, Muzaffarabad. They also were gradually banned, the last being "*Maktoob-i-Kashmir*", a leaflet of four pages sold on the streets by vendors, who were jailed when caught.

In his biography on Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Ashraf Atta of Lahore writes:

"To participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1931 against the *Dogra* rule in Kashmir several groups of volunteers started off from different cities of the Punjab. One contingent took off from the Jhelum front and was led by Sheikh Illahi Baksh, a volunteer from Chiniot. It was attacked with spears by the *Dogras* who also opened fire on it. A Public Prosecutor of the State, Pandit Vishva Mittar inflicted a fatal blow with his spear on Sheikh Illahi Baksh. He was the first "*Shaheed*" of the Kashmir Movement, whose supreme sacrifice gave everlasting life to it. Illahi Baksh's '*Shahadat*' lit a flame throughout

the Punjab, and hundreds of contingents not only from the Punjab but also from Delhi and U.P. (India) started arriving in Lahore and Sialkot to take part in the Movement. Several issues of the "*Zamindar*" were forfeited in connection with this Movement. The government not only seized all copies of its "*Ilahi Bakhsh Shaheed Number*" but also confiscated the Rs. 2,000/- surety of the "*Zamindar*" and demanded a fresh surety of Rs. 3,000/-.³

Altogether about 45,000 Muslims from the Punjab and 5,000 from other Provinces, Delhi, U.P., Bihar, Bengal and C.P. were arrested during three months.

Justice Muhammad Yusuf Saraf reports on "*Inquilab*" which was also spearheading the campaign for reforms in Kashmir, that the British Governor took action by demanding a fresh cash security of Rs. 3,000/- from the newspaper proprietor and a cash security of Rs. 2,000/- from the Muslim Printing Press, Lahore. As a result of public agitation a deputation consisting of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Malik Firoze Khan Noon and Chaudhry Shahab-ud-Din, President of the Punjab Council, met the Governor, the security demanded from the press was withdrawn and that from the newspaper reduced to Rs. 500/-.⁴

It was due to his love for Kashmir that Abdul Majid Salik showed such devotion and perseverance to its cause. It was in those times a risk, publishing the news sheets and newspapers as he did because at that time before Independence it was still British India. For example, a British magistrate from the Kashmir Government came to Maulana Abdul Majid Salik in Lahore and asked him to produce the names of the people who had been writing articles and giving news items for these banned papers. He replied:

"Bring a warrant for my arrest. I will not produce names of the writers nor will I hand over any material."

Then he sent for his manager and advised him to burn all the letters and material which had been smuggled out of Kashmir into Lahore.

In spite of his devotion to the Kashmir Muslim cause Abdul Majid Salik did not agree with Sheikh Abdullah's policies before Independence. *Salik's* son, Abdul Rashid Ershad, retired Director

of *Radio Pakistan* related to me when I met him on 29th December, 1983 in Lahore that his father told Sheikh Abdullah:

"You are working with Congress."

Sheikh Abdullah replied that he was also working for Kashmir. *Salik* retorted:

"You are doing this work in collaboration with Congress."

Sheikh Abdullah replied:

"Please do not interfere with our affairs because this secularism suits this State and I am trying for the liberation of Kashmir with the help of the Hindus from the *Dogra raj*."

Salik's rejoinder was:

"You should follow the line of the Muslim League."

In spite of his devotion to the Kashmir cause *Salik* went to Kashmir only twice. When Sheikh Abdullah asked him to be his guest he refused because he did not agree with his policies before 1947. He said frankly:

"You are working with Congress."

Mr. Ershad summed up his father as follows:—

"My father was a journalist, poet and humorist. He used to write a humorous column everyday for his paper. He used to regularly broadcast first for *All India Radio*, then for *Radio Pakistan*, and was called the Wickham Steed of India. He lived and worked in the rich flowering period of the thirties and forties when his friends, colleagues and associates were poets, writers, journalists such as Dr. Iqbal, A. S. Bokhari, Imtiaz Ali Taj, Chiragh Hasrat, Dr. M. D. Taseer, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ghulam Abbas, Maulana Ghulam Rasool Meher, Shorish Kashmiri, Sufi Tabassum and so many others. The Muslim Leaguers of that time were also his associates, such as Mian Bashir Ahmed, Malik Khizar Hyat and Sikandar Hyat Khan. My father died on September 27th, 1959 at Lahore, aged 65 years."

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SHEIKH ABDULLAH—THE HUMANIST

And finally what will be the conclusion we draw about Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Sher-i-Kashmir, *Baba-i-Qoom* to his people?

Justice Muhammad Yusuf Saraf has said:

"In the politics of Eastern countries the role of the individual is very important. It is only with an extraordinary national leader as pivot of a movement that a nation has succeeded either in its march for freedom or economic advancement."¹

To say, as so many have, that he was a true nationalist, a secularist, a participant in the Freedom Movement, the national struggle, is not enough.

But out of more than fifty years of struggle did any other leader spend nearly forty years, the best years of his life, in and out of jail, in externment, in exile from the homeland where he wanted to live and serve and shape according to the pattern of the New Kashmir which he, along with his fellow idealists, worked so hard to evolve before 1941?

Of many other national leaders how many of his followers struggled hysterically to touch his garments, to pluck hairs from his head as souvenirs, to touch the ground where his foot had trod out of reverence, because he was the first to sacrifice with and for them?

Sher-i-Kashmir was tolerant of others and their beliefs, but stuck to his own belief and values when he felt they were right, letting them develop and change in the light of experience and developing wisdom. Never selling out to others out of cowardice, not being used by others, but using them for his mission.

He possessed an inner strength which was beyond that of ordinary mortals. How many of us would have the strength of conviction to sacrifice our liberty, our health, our family obligations,

our friends, lose our political colleagues, for the path which we believed was the right one? Thus he was a visionary of the kind we will probably not see again, for times have changed. But he came at a time in history when he was needed by his people and began the mission which he himself said is for others to carry on.

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